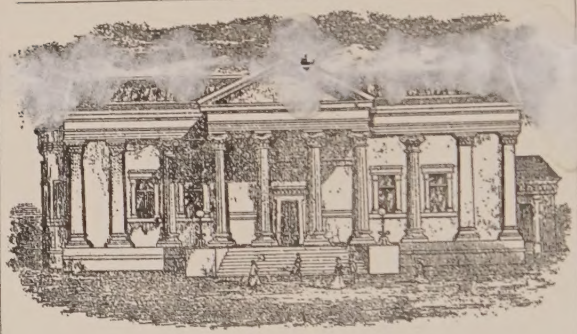
A Scot in France And Switzerland



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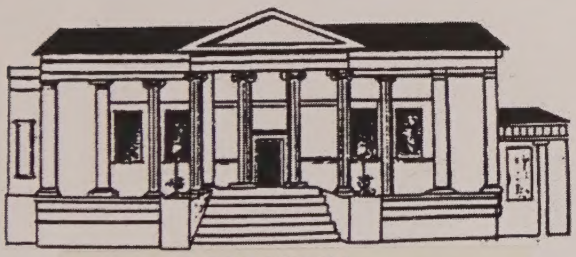

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A Scot in France And Switzerland

By D. T. Holmes, B.A.

"Je dirai: J'étais là; telle chose m'avint:
Vous y croirez être vous-même."

La Fontaine.

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To

JAMES COATS, JUNR., ESQ.,

Ferguslie House,

Paisley.

With all respect and honour due,
I dedicate this book to you,
Wherein appears, from stage to stage,
My Continental pilgrimage;
And if a volume such as this
Of tours and talks with French and Swiss,
And varied store of foreign news,
Should give you pleasure to peruse,
Or, now and then, perchance, have power
To wile away a leisure hour,
The writer of the same will think
He used aright his pen and ink.

D. T. HOLMES.

PREFACE.

Herein is given, without offence,
With freedom both of mood and tense,
The travel-scrip of one whose rule
Is never to be far from school,
And who, when on a foreign coast,
Reads much, walks more, but listens most.

D. T. H.

Ingleholm, Bridge of Weir,
Renfrewshire, October 15th, 1910.

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Envoi: As others see us.

A SCOT IN FRANCE AND SWITZERLAND.

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY.

Three years out of ten—The blithe new-comer—A severe critic—Sterne's *Sentimental Journey*—On the boat to Calais: histrionic genius of the French nation—"A little English penny."

THREE YEARS OUT OF TEN.

Since the summer of 1900, I have passed about three years of my life in France or in the French part of Switzerland. Two of the years, mainly studious ones, were continuously spent abroad, with no break for a trip home to Britain. The other year of the three is more than made up by holiday tours lasting for a month or six weeks. I may say at once that I think very highly of the French people, and among them have spent a world of happy days. I made very persevering and determined efforts to understand them through the medium of their fine language and their fascinating literature, and this was, in their eyes, accounted to me

for righteousness. In course of time, French almost felt like a second mother tongue to me, and I could speak in it, without panic, to nearly everybody I met.

Seeing that (according to some philosophers of renown) most men have, even at their prime, a very inadequate knowledge of *themselves*, it would be stupid and presumptuous on my part to think that a period of three years could give a maturity of experience that would warrant me in speaking with authority on any of the various aspects of French life that have come under my notice. But, after all, the French are wonderfully like ourselves, with organs, eyes, affections, and dimensions not greatly dissimilar from those of the ordinary Briton. Perhaps a little *less* tickling makes them laugh, and a little *less* pathos makes them weep, but even in France you find persons of wonderful stolidity and immunity from pathos. You have to modify your views and generalisations day by day. There is a danger in striking *averages* when it is only *individuals* that are encountered. Numerous individuals are introduced in the following pages, all taken from life and as truthfully drawn as the fallible faculty of memory permits. If any one should say they are not typical Frenchmen, I have no reply to make except that I met them in France, that I did not look for them, and that I greatly enjoyed meeting them.

THE BLITHE NEW-COMER.

If Mr. Aliquis should persist in laying stress on the presumption of writing a book on France after only three years' stay, I should hint to him that those who

stay too long in a foreign land are apt to forget the rapture and novelty of their first impressions. I write of France as a Briton, and would rather stay at home all my days than lose my nationality. Personally, I should rather read observations on my own country by a new-comer than by an old residenter, provided the former exhibited some sympathetic imagination and an absence of glaring prejudice. The new-comer sees that which the film of habit and indifference hides from the natives; but if he remain long enough, the film will come over *his* eyes too. When a Briton alights for the first time on the pavement of Paris, he is charmed and astonished by the novelty of everything: the uniform and gait of the sergents de ville, the great black cassocks of the clergy, the green colour in the glasses of the absinthe drinkers, the majestic boulevards planted with trees, the freedom, vivacity, and gesticulations of the people whom he meets and whose ways are not his ways. He hears a foreign tongue spoken all around him and is convinced, at length, that the French language, with which he had so much trouble in his youth, is really and truly a vehicle of communication between civilised people, and not, as he has probably often suspected, a mere pestilent invention of the schoolmaster, designed for the torment of the young. It is to the recent arrivals in a land and to the criticisms they indulge in, that we may say, with Wordsworth—

> "O blithe new-comer I have heard,
> I hear thee *and rejoice*."

After what time does the blitheness cease and the charm of novelty pass away? In France, "gay sprightly

land of mirth and social ease," the time required to bring on ennui is probably longer than would be needed in any other European country. That Briton must be lacking in responsiveness to art and to life's enthusiasms who feels any tedium in France before he can count his stay by years.

A SEVERE CRITIC.

"I have been to France several times," said a Highland ferryman to me one day last year as I waited for the Outer Isles steamer at an Argyllshire pier, "but it was not good for my morality." "What do you mean?" I said to him, "the French are quite as moral as we are, *although they say they're not.*" "Allow me to explain," replied the old Celt. "When I was in France, I was forced, against my will, to tell a tremendous number of lies, because I had an imperfect knowledge of the language. I had to use up the words I knew, whether they were true or false. Pretty often, too, I caught myself saying *j'ai soif* when I ought to have said *j'ai faim*, for the stuff they imbibe over there is not so satisfying as ours." "I am afraid," I said, "it will go hard with not a few tourists at the day of judgment, if all their continental fibs, due to dearth of vocabulary, are remembered against them. What parts of France did you visit?" "I have been," he replied, "to *Boo-long*, *Bored-oh*, and *Mar-sigh*, but I was invariably glad to get back home. I never had an *enjoyable smoke* all the time I was away. Tobacco never tastes the same to me when I'm abroad. And then the French, in spite of their boasted civilisation, have very poor judgment in

the matter of matches. Their clay-pipes, too, are wretched, and would not be tolerated for a single day in Ardnamurchan."

The complaints of the old ferryman reminded me of the distressing narrative of Tobias Smollett, whose chapters of travels are mainly an account of his own discomforts.

STERNE'S *SENTIMENTAL JOURNEY.*

There is one book of French travel for which I have always had a great affection, and which I hope Providence will spare me long enough to read fifty times still, with reasonably long intervals between each perusal. I refer to the *Sentimental Journey* of the Rev. Laurence Sterne, a book, which though rather imperfect as a guide, is, from the literary point of view, worth a whole wilderness of Baedekers. Sterne's book is about as useful to the matter-of-fact voyager in France as *Sartor Resartus* would be to a tailor in search of a manual of instruction for making clothes. Sterne is sometimes in a hurry and sometimes he isn't. He will dismiss a palace in a frugal line or two and spend several chapters on an old coach, a pieman, a dead ass, a starling, or an odd train of thought that nobody ever set running before. The humorous parson belongs to the same school of discursive authorship as Cato the Elder, who, in his history of Rome, barely mentioned some of the great battles in the Punic War, but entered into minute details respecting the harness and appearance of a war elephant. Such brilliantly inconsecutive books are the most readable and refreshing parts of literature.

France is a mere excuse for Sterne to talk about his own feelings, to sigh, to shed tears, to make love, to lead himself gracefully into and out of temptation, and generally to show his incomparable wealth of whimsical humour. With time and patience, almost anybody could compile a guide-book; but there has been only one Sterne, and we ought to be thankful that his tour in France gave him the opportunity of writing an important part of his autobiography. Baedeker needs an annual overhaul in view of the ceaseless flux of life, the alteration of time-tables, the triumph of inventions, and the building of new hotels. But nobody ever lays a revising hand on Sterne; he is as good as new and as up-to-date as the most recent hand-book of travel.

The French have, I am happy to say, a great admiration for Sterne's book, which is as well known among them as with us. They not only appreciate to the full the originality of its style and its distinctive English humour, but they are also ready enough to admit that the author, for all his caprice and sentiment, gives most shrewd and accurate portrayals of French life and character.

ON THE BOAT TO CALAIS: HISTRIONIC GENIUS OF THE FRENCH NATION.

No sooner had I got on board at Dover (with Smollett in one pocket and Sterne in another) than I was irresistibly attracted by the demeanour and antics of an old French gentleman who was accompanied by his valet. No place on the deck formed a satisfactory site for his chair. *Here*, there was too much wind; *there*,

engine-room odours were wafted up to his nostrils and made him squeamish; *yonder*, there was a crush of passengers, and he had too little room to express his views. I have never seen any actor who possessed such versatility of gesture and expression. As he was clean-shaved, long-haired, falcon-eyed, and comely of shape, he had all the physical attributes of a stage-hero: add, too, that his face had an abundance of mobile skin that was admirably adapted for the instantaneous expression of any emotion that might be operating on his mercurial brain. Anger, scorn, indignation, despondency, and uplifting joy chased each other in quick succession across his countenance, and his tongue had ever the fitting word. The remarks he threw in the direction of his valet were of a caustic and personal nature: "Come here, thou good-for-nothing, and hold my hair to me that I may be able to put on my hat, the which otherwise the wind will soon have blown into the sea. Stretch now behind me thy coat that I be not drowned by the spray. Go, go and hide thyself; thou art clumsy. I am old, I am cold, I am sick, I am disgusted. My hat goes: recover it, and do not stand planted uselessly there."

I was sorry for the valet, but my sympathy was altogether misplaced. He retired with an air of deep grief behind the great red funnel of the steamer and, when hidden thus from his master's eye, he doubled up in a fit of unfeigned merriment, shaking with laughter even to the effusion of tears. "Gustave, Gustave, my good boy, come here," (shouted by his master) was the signal for him to come out of his trance of joy and step

forth, with a resumption of his doleful air, into the old man's line of vision.

The reader is here requested to note one of the most charming characteristics of the French nation. They easily get into a fury, but, having a most keen sense of humour, they begin to laugh at themselves when they go too far. For them, tragedy and comedy are near neighbours. "Pardon me, my boy," said the old man, with a gesture of the choicest urbanity; "I said too much to thee and I bite the fingers for it now. I am old and bear ill this crossing. But the sea is calmer, and as for me, I am so equally. Come and sit beside me and we shall grill a cigarette together. I do not blame thee for my lack of comfort: we other French wished a tunnel, but the English would not have it so. Ah, *la politique!* But we must have patience; the tunnel will come with time, even though, as with many another French proposal for the benefit of mankind, we must wait five thousand years to see it get itself accomplished."

"A LITTLE ENGLISH PENNY!"

I hope that the vivacious old gentleman of the preceding paragraph is still alive and gesticulating as eloquently as ever. There are few cross-channel steamers that do not carry his like, and so prove that the amiable comedies of Labiche are not entirely drawn from imagination. Let me give another example of French histrionic talent, this time from a humbler sphere of life.

The train that is to convey the tourists from Calais

to Paris remains in the "maritime station" of the former town for a considerable time, to allow the mails and luggage to be landed from the boat. It is sometimes a dreary wait, but if the passenger is not languid and ill from the effects of the sea, he may be able to cast an eye of enjoyment on the pranks of a host of ragged urchins who come along from Calais to beg for coppers. Though their knowledge of English is confined to the single phrase, "Please, please, a little English penny," they succeed pretty well in conveying their meaning and in suggesting, by dint of gestures and writhings, the melting ideas of dire hunger and abject poverty. What British heart could grudge "a little English penny" to a tiny rogue of ten who points into his open mouth with the index-finger of his right hand, dismally rubs his waistcoat in the region of his stomach, shrugs his shoulders, and finally lifts both hand and eye to heaven with diverting solemnity! The boys leap on the footboard of the carriages and walk along the whole length of the train, tapping on the windows to attract attention. Sometimes the little varlets are off like a flash and may be seen scrambling in terror over the wooden barricade that separates the railway from the dune—their flight being due to the rapid approach and execrations of a station official who has spied their illegitimate play-acting. As the train moves off, the boys may be observed straddling on the fence and casting imploring looks at the carriage windows. Some of the tourists fling coppers in the direction of the fence, with disastrous results to the equilibrium of the young mendicants.

CHAPTER II.

BOULOGNE-SUR-MER.

Harbour scenes and market hucksters—The upper town: St. Mary of the Waves—Sand and foam: an ancient mariner—"'Twas when his banners at Boulogne"—A crowd of jolly Londoners—Under the greenwood tree—An artistic Frenchman and his family—The lure of the little horses—A happy household—One who preferred flourishes to straight lines.

HARBOUR SCENES AND MARKET HUCKSTERS.

I CANNOT say much that is flattering about the lower town of Boulogne. The port is tolerable at high tide, but when the ebb has uncovered the harbour mud, the resulting odour, blending with the exhalations of the fish-market, is a terror, especially in a time of heat. The far side of the Liane, where the English steamers put in, is quite openly given up to railway trains, so that various dangers beset the unwary: sunstroke from the importunate sun above, danger from a motor while avoiding an engine, prostration from the harbour smells, damage to the limbs through the sudden disappearance of one leg through an unexpected hole in the woodwork of the quay. The near or town side of the Liane, along which the tramways run, is full of fishy fumes and maritime bustle. Behind the shops and taverns of the broad, main thoroughfare, there are streets, narrow and

dirty, into which the fastidious should not penetrate. One squalid lane, rising at an angle of forty-five degrees, runs up a hill near the Casino, and may be regarded with most safety from the main street below. This lane is a perfect rabbit-warren of mean, picturesque old houses, decaying under their red and dark-brown tiles. It is always washing-day in some of the houses, and you are certain, if you look, to see coloured clouts protruding on poles to dry, at not a few of the windows.

The English tourist in Boulogne should not fail to visit the market-square on the day when the country-folk come in, from far and near, to sell their produce. The square I speak of is right under the big church of the lower town, and on market-days is a bewilderment of booths, where, amid the clatter of hucksters and purchasers, you may delight your eye by beholding the loveliest of flowers, the most succulent of fruits, the plumpest of chickens, and the quaintest of costumes. Many of the old creatures you see knitting beside their stalls waiting for customers, have been afoot since four A.M., and have paid a tax at the town-toll (*octroi*) on every chicken they are offering for sale. Britain has no detestable *octroi*; let us be proud of that, even though we pay no less for our poultry than the French do. Another reason for patriotic complacency may be deduced from the existence of a *Boucherie Chevaline* (horse-butchery) constructed in an angle of the Holy Edifice itself, and always crowded with customers on market-days. The dark look of those horse sausages exposed for sale on the counter, is extremely disquieting to the English visitor in Boulogne, and is prone to make

him, temporarily, embrace the doctrines of vegetarianism. But I think nobly of my landlady, and no way approve of Pythagoras.

THE UPPER TOWN: ST. MARY OF THE WAVES.

The upper town has walls as thick as Chester, narrow streets where the air is noxious, the official town-house, and an immense, gorgeous cathedral with a far-seen dome, which is a mark for ships at sea. The saint most in honour (though the others are by no means neglected) is St. Mary of the Waves, and she looks well, standing with serene face and robed in white, in an insignificant wherry, which yawning waves are threatening to engulf. How well the Catholic Church can enlist local sentiment into the service of devotion! Here we have St. Mary of the Waves; in the highlands of the West there is St. Mary of the Mountains; and in Paris there is a saint (I greatly regret that I cannot recall his name) who presides over Competitive Examinations. Decay is never likely to make serious inroads on a Church, so ancient and so up-to-date, so majestic and so lowly, and possessed of such an exhaustless and many-sided hagiology. Our Lady of the Waves is a kind and placable saint, and those whose prayers she has heard have fixed many a vowed picture, costly gift, and commemorative tablet on the church walls hard by her altar. These are the "hits," but what of the "misses"? The latter have a chapel of grief all to themselves, not in this great cathedral, but on a cliff near the sea and overlooking

the beach. It is less pathetic to read of the joy of answered prayer than to be told to pray for the souls of so many fathers, sons, and husbands, who went to sea and never came back. No one can leave that little chapel without an anguished heart.

Outside the broad bulwarks of the upper town, there is a free space with seats and walks and flowers and a monument to commemorate the natives of the town who were slain in the terrible war of 1870. Thirty years before that war, in 1840 namely, Louis Napoleon was a prisoner in the Castle of Boulogne, which is not very far from this monument. Cowper's lines came into my mind as I thought of the man of destiny, and of what his rise and fall meant to France.

> "War's a game which were their subjects wise
> Kings would not dare to play at. Nations would do well
> To extort their truncheons from the puny hands
> Of heroes whose infirm and baby minds
> Are gratified with mischief, and who spoil,
> Because men suffer it, their toy, the world."

For all his fine writing, M. Ollivier has not removed from the authors of the war of 1870 the slur of the terrible phrase *de gaîté de cœur*. Few characters in history cut such a poor figure as Napoleon III., while, attached to his liver and rending it for evermore, are the talons of that pitiless vulture, Victor Hugo.*

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* Our English poet, Browning, in his *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau*, has treated Napoleon III. as harshly as ever Hugo did. In that piece, the ex-Emperor is made to recite 2,100 lines of apologetic blank verse to a girl in a London tea-room.

SAND AND FOAM: AN ANCIENT MARINER.

There are but two quarters in Boulogne where I should care to fix my dwelling-place permanently: either on the high part outside the walls (which overlooks the huddled town and commands wide views over the sea, and also, inland, over the civilised scenery of tilled lands), or down at the beach where there is a fine new boulevard named after the great judge of books, Sainte-Beuve, who was a native of the town. To sit on a high balcony communicating with a room on the third floor of some villa on this boulevard and read the *Causeries du lundi* is no ordinary treat. Sainte-Beuve is no novelist, and his books can tolerate mind-wandering and interruptions. A page or two of this critic's talk and then a look at the world outside! The view below may well excuse an occasional glance. The channel is there with its multitudinous dash and sparkle of waves. Horses are continually on the trot pulling bathing-cabins over the sands right down to the edge of the waters. The beach is dotted with tents, large and small, for invalids, loungers, and readers.* Every few minutes electric cars rush past to the neat little village

*The above description has reference only to the months of summer. In winter the beach is deserted, and the tall houses on the boulevard are vacant and forlorn. Cars run seldomer to Wimereux, and often with difficulty, for the sea comes over the barrier during a storm and covers the tram-rails. At such a time, when the ocean is full of howlings and spray, and the long breakwater cannot be seen for the billows that sweep over it, may no friend of mine (unless he be an artist in search of a sublime seascape) take it into his head to cross the Channel!

of Wimereux, mounting gaily the steep road thither, and running through the breezes that blow in strength along the summit of the cliffs. There is a pervading gleam of strong sunshine and colour: the white surf, the blue sea, the black reefs on the right, the vivid green of the sward, and the gay tints of the flowers in front of the boulevard. The great pier that stretches its two arms far out into the channel on the left is thronged with promenaders who watch the arrival and departure of the English steamers. Sometimes a huge Atlantic liner that has come from Germany may be seen lying a mile or two out from the pier, awaiting a tender that brings passengers for a voyage over the Atlantic to New York. When the cosmopolitan crowd of emigrants who have come by train to Boulogne from all parts of Europe have been transferred to the liner, the great boat shrieks a farewell to Europe and departs majestically, bearing her passengers and their fortunes to the lands of the west. In no long time the liner is below the horizon's verge and our stretch of sea is relieved from the melancholy look of her. Yachts with their white sails and beflagged excursion steamers are more in keeping with the spirit of this holiday resort.

It is well sometimes to descend from one's altitude on the balcony and cross the road to the beach itself. There are *causeries* there which are fully as informative as those of Sainte-Beuve.

You will not gaze long at the ocean and faintly-seen England, undisturbed, for the fishermen that haunt the beach at all hours of the day are notorious beggars and crave tobacco and pence quite unblushingly. They are

old and feeble, most of them, and being no longer fit for the hard life of the waves, they pass their time exciting pity in the breast of the casual visitor. It is not easy to refuse a pipeful of mixture to a picturesque old veteran who, though in rags, makes his request with the ease and grace of an earl. Do not grudge the tobacco, but see that you get some kind of information in return. To do them justice, they are eloquent talkers and never in a hurry to leave a good listener. It seems to be a rooted opinion among French fisher folk that *the Government of France is rotten and that the only hope of salvation lies in the Church.* They have a most touching trust in the Roman Catholic clergy. "The good fathers," said one of these old mendicants to me, "look after our children, teach them their catechism, help the girls to get dresses for their first communion, and bring us all comfort when we are ill. It is they who bless our boats when we go off to the fishing, and if any of us don't come back they do what they can for us in that chapel there built on the top of the cliff. It is a very bad thing for France that the Government is discouraging and persecuting the Church and trying to drive God's servants out of the country *à coups de gourdons.* There will soon be no religion at all in the land, and then men will do what they like in this world when they have no fear of judgment in the next. As it is, the boat-owners do not treat us well: all the money goes into their pockets, and we, who catch the fish and brave the tempests, get little more than abuse and starvation." He uttered the foregoing sentences in a tone of deep feeling, and then, after a moment's

silence, he began to praise the tobacco I had given him and which he was smoking. "That's good tobacco," he said, "where did it come from?" "Scotland." "Oh, Scotland," he replied, "that's the country where there's *no religion at all.* I was at Montrose pretty often in my youth when I was a *mousse* (cabin-boy), and I never saw a crucifix or 'Calvary' on any single occasion that I was ashore."

One sometimes gets as interesting information from a man of this type as from a university graduate. Educated men of all countries tend to become very much alike seeing that they have the same books for teachers. Racial peculiarities are seen at their purest in the stratum of the toilers. After conversing with this tattered old wight, who was in no sense of the word *vulgar*, I was not surprised to read in the papers how fiercely the fishermen of the Norman and Breton villages had resisted the attempts of the Government to take an inventory of their churches. Le Portel, a quaint little place on the coast near Boulogne, was the scene of some most painful religious riots. From their perch on the belfry, the villagers pelted the gendarmes with stones; and the curé, a militant servant of the Prince of Peace, was the soul of the resistance. The Church began with fishermen, and it is certain that if religion be ever forsaken of the bourgeoisie, she will find a refuge among the nets and herring-scales. When a French villager fights for his church, he feels that all the significance of his life is at stake. He is unable to conceive of existence without religion. In Brittany, the great event of the year is the *pardon* of St. Anne of Auray, and the

occasion is signalised not merely by candles, blessings, holy ablutions, processions, and devotional chants, but by dancing, drinking, and merrymaking of every kind. Thus the word *pardon* which, properly speaking, means a religious festival, has become associated also with sociability and the joy of life. The peasants go to see the bishop and get his blessing, and thereafter proceed in bands to shows, entertainments, and wine-shops. A *pardon* thus connotes both *secular* and *sacred*, and there is no pedantic separation between the two.

"'TWAS WHEN HIS BANNERS AT BOULOGNE."

Thomas Campbell, who wrote the *Pleasures of Hope*, resided for a short time in Boulogne, and obtained, from some humorous prints, still to be seen in the local museum, the material for one of his most charming little poems—the one that tells of a captured British sailor who, Crusoe-like, constructed with his own hands "a sorry skiff with wattled willows," and tried to escape to England:

> "A French guard caught him on the beach,
> His little *Argo* sorely jeering;
> Till tidings of him chanced to reach
> Napoleon's hearing."

Campbell's lines are so neat and forcible, his telling of the story so graphic and pithy, that hundreds of people, who have learned the poem at school, instantly think of Campbell whenever Boulogne is mentioned. The verses lead the memory back to that year of dread when the greatest soldier of all time had his huge army encamped

on the heights and plateaux near the town, fondly hoping he might get the Channel free of our fleet for the space of a day and secure a safe passage to England for his invading flotilla. The stately Column erected on the outskirts of the town near where the Grand Army was tented, is a permanent reminder of the Emperor's ambition. On its summit, Napoleon, in stone, looks over the waves in the direction of England. At the base of the Column there is a spacious and pleasant garden where one can sit and appropriately muse on the madness of ambition and the emptiness of fame. On a clear day the coast of Kent is clearly seen from this eminence.

Juvenal, in his bitterly humorous way, has told us that the martial exploits of Hannibal furnished excellent material for essayists who wished to practise their pens in rhetoric and composition. The career of Napoleon has similarly been of great service to the declaimers of France. As is natural, most of the Napoleonic poetry aims at sublimity by methods of praise and rapt hyperbole. On the other hand, a small minority, among whom may be specially mentioned the Academician, Auguste Barbier, have found inspiration in a passionate distaste for the Emperor's homicidal energies. There are not many French poems more impressive than that iambic one in which Barbier likens France to a noble and spirited steed ridden to death by a merciless cavalier.

A CROWD OF JOLLY LONDONERS.

The people in Boulogne, being beholden to the English visitors for the circulation of a considerable amount of money in their town, are desirous of keeping on good terms with their clients. An old inscription on the stair-case of the municipal museum declares that "Britain and France, if united, might defy the world." During the Boer War, however, when Continental sympathies were overwhelmingly on the side of the Krugerites and when a newspaper campaign of unparalleled virulence was waged against us almost everywhere abroad, the people of Boulogne were somewhat affected with the anti-British fury, but not nearly so much as elsewhere, for their proximity to England had given them proof that John Bull, with all his faults, was a thoroughly good fellow. With respect to that war, I may say, without treading on embers that are still hot on the feet, that it lent itself very easily to misrepresentation, and that a generous-spirited nation like the French were inclined to side with the Dutch farmers, who were fighting so valiantly against our troops. In the month of June, 1901, at which date I was resident in Boulogne, a great crowd of excursionists came to the town direct from the mouth of the Thames and round by the North Foreland. A miscellaneous crowd of Londoners enfranchised for the day, and impartially delighted with the sea, the sands, the cliffs, and the beer! They paddled in the waves, smoked on the rocks, swilled in the cafés, and lavished their money in true English style. The French, with whom polite-

ness is an instinctive virtue, received the visitors well, but not effusively. As the day wore on, however, a warm feeling of admiration became evident on both sides. A crowd assembled on the pier to see the visitors off. The French sang our National Anthem and the tourists replied by giving the *Marseillaise*. The English boat steamed away amid huzzas and enthusiasm. When she was well out into the open, a Frenchman, pocketing the handkerchief he had been fluttering, called out: "*Maintenant que les Anglais sont partis, Vivent les Boërs.*" And the crowd, as one man, shouted *Vivent les Boërs.* The incident is a good illustration of French psychology.

UNDER THE GREENWOOD TREE.

Boulogne is an excellent town to get out of, especially on a hot August day when the sun glares pitilessly on the sand of the seashore and its multitudes, and on the turbid, ill-smelling mud of the harbour at ebb. Sit not at such a time, perspiring and drinking beer under the awning of some café, but betake yourself to the woods and have a stroll through quietened sunlight, in cool glades, over Nature's own carpet of softest moss. There is a little train, of narrow gauge, that leaves the upper part of the town and goes puffing most audaciously through the very heart of the gigantic forest and sets you down in the midst of the loveliest greeneries and most romantic isolations. It is satisfactory to have the assurance that there is no dewy dell, tangled copse or ferny knoll in the whole wood that is not within easy walking distance of some thirst-

slaking hostel, embowered in leaves. Such knowledge is itself a consolation and enables you to smoke leisurely in the bosom of the wood and say chidingly to your thirst, "*Not yet, but soon; not yet, but soon.*" There are few of these woodland taverns without some quaint specialty of bite or sup: here, the pancakes are incomparably fine; there, the renown reposes on toothsome fritters; and, in that other, there is some trick of preparation that results in the most delightsome of coffee. All have gardens and arbours, where there are wings and chirpings, and sweet odours and gurgling rivulets, too, that come from doing a good turn to the rustic mills. After you have laughed at the naïve peasants playing skittles, and at the children frolicking on swings that send toes aloft to kick the high foliage, you can descend through farm-paths and inspect some of the tiny villages that edge the wood. If you see a board warning you off and bearing the inscription: *Il y a une vache méchante*, don't believe a word of it; it is a mere trick of the farmer. It is always advisable to go into the village church and sit down for a little to rest limbs and soul. Some of the country churches near Boulogne have mural decorations of great merit. Who could be such a pagan as grudge a prayer of thanks to the Almighty after such a glorious outing? Many a man who can't *say* a prayer can, at least, *feel* one.

AN ARTISTIC FRENCHMAN AND HIS FAMILY.

I desire to say a little here about a worthy Frenchman and his family whom I have known intimately for a number of years and with whom I correspond

regularly. It is most absurd that British people should form their notions of French life from a series of stupid rumours due to the misrepresentations of the realistic novelists. M. Dupont is a typical Frenchman of the middle class, of charming manners, and fond of art in all its forms. He is a teacher of music not far from Boulogne-sur-Mer, and can play on every instrument from the banjo to the organ. Before breakfast any day of the week, he can sit down at his window, and on the back of a post-card, sketch for you a most artistic little sea-scape, or the wrinkled face of an old sailor, or a bare-footed fisher-maiden with a load of shrimps on her back. It is only by dint of rigid economy that he and his thrifty dame can save any cash, for music is not an overpaid profession either in this country or abroad. He is almost continuously occupied with his tuition from eight in the morning till six in the evening, and on certain nights of the week in summer he has an engagement to fiddle in the Casino orchestra. Madame is a jolly, round-faced, little woman, very voluble, and so good-natured and sympathetic that she will weep if the story she is telling you contains the slightest trace of pathos. But, then, next moment, ere the tears are dry, some comic touch will send her into convulsions of laughter, so long continued as to cause alarm. Madame has two children, a boy and a girl, who stay with their grandmother in town. The oldest, seventeen years, is indeed a child; his face is one big, permanent smile; he has no interest in books—but give him a fiddle and he will make it speak. The mother condones all his faults,

and has no doubt that the drill of military service will pull him up, and wipe out his gawky smile and improve his chest measurement. The father is not so hopeful: "That boy is too soft," he says; "he will never do for business; people would swindle him; he would get up some morning and find himself without a *sou*." The girl, Félicia, is fifteen, and has alertness for two. She has gained prize upon prize at school for dressmaking, cooking, drawing, music—everything that implies quickness of ear, eye, and hand. Her parents are, as I said, not in possession of much ready money; but they have taken care that she shall have the dowry so necessary for a French girl if she is to get a husband. Since Félicia's earliest years, they have been paying a yearly premium to an Assurance Company, and, at twenty-one, the girl will have quite a tidy sum to her name.

THE LURE OF THE LITTLE HORSES.

Respectable French gentlemen will tell you that there is a enormous amount of gambling in France, and that the vice is yearly spreading throughout the nation and the army. At all the watering-places there are casinos, and in all the casinos are *petits chevaux*. I have no sympathy with monied noodles who, out of an unholy and deliberate craving for excitement, frequent the casinos and get well bitten for their pains. It is the folk of moderate means who lose what they can ill afford that deserve a little compassion. M. Dupont, whom I have mentioned, lost 1,500 francs one summer by the *petits chevaux*, and did not retrieve himself for many a long day. He was gaining for a night or two,

and, in his haste to be rich, staked a large sum which he lost in its entirety. His heart is sore still when he thinks of his loss. I am sure he seldom passes the Casino without saying something strong. His charge for private tuition being three francs an hour, a simple arithmetical operation shows that he lost in a few minutes what it would take him five hundred hours to recover. You may be sure Madame rated him well for his folly. I heard her tell the tale in his presence. Her eyes were full of tears as she laid off the story of woe, and *he* could only look at the ground and groan.

If M. Dupont, instead of *losing* 1,500 francs, had *won* 15,000, his wife would probably have regarded him not as a sinner but as a hero. "*In any case*," says he, "*wherein consists the sin of gambling!*" It is not indeed very easy to condemn gambling on theoretical *à priori* grounds that would not take in many practices, stockbroking, *e.g.*, commonly regarded as of no special turpitude. From the utilitarian and prudential standpoints, it was highly indiscreet of M. Dupont to hazard the loss of a sum which he could not afford to lose without grave consequences to himself and family. But we are all indiscreet at times without losing our self-respect. The sin of gambling is mainly deduced from its tendency to harm others and to deprave the gambler in mind and body. It is a prolific source of crime, and, in the realm of commerce, is apt to give rise to a horde of unscrupulous parasites.

A HAPPY HOUSEHOLD.

Another family I chance to know very well is that of the Verdins. The husband has a business of his own in a little side street of Boulogne, not very far from the portals of the upper town. His good lady stands behind the counter of the shop, and it is a continuous tinkle-tinkle of the door-bell that greets her ear as the customers come and go. The spare room in her house is let to two English ladies, who live in the town to learn French: she attends to the material wants of these foreigners and, as part of her bargain with them, she converses edifyingly in their hearing every day for an hour, sets them on to write French exercises, and makes dogmatic and rather sweeping statements on the subjunctive mood. A daughter of nineteen, Suzanne, is her mother's tireless adjutant and takes duty in the shop or with the ladies, as may be required. Suzanne, like her mother, speaks French beautifully, but as she knows grammar better, she is less dogmatic about rules and exceptions. The father of the household is upright, full of generous instincts, and entirely devoted to his family. He has an unbounded reliance on the commercial abilities of his wife. Occasionally he may be seen in the wine-shops, having a drink, but never alone, so that he may be doing, or attempting to do, a little business. His chief happiness is not in reducing his commercial competitors to despair, but in tickling the face of the earth with rake and hoe. Near the base of Napoleon's big Column, up on the breezy heights above the sea, he has rented a parcel of ground, and it is there

that most of his leisure is agreeably and thriftily spent. It is a pleasure to see him in the midst of his winsome flowers and his pot-herbs, full of rapt joy, chanting some lilt of Béranger that deals with country loves and sights, or maybe with the great Lord of War on the top of the huge pedestal near by. If you can't talk about flowers and fruit, you need not go near him. Madame is the talking partner, and he is uneasy with strangers if she isn't there. I managed to work up an interest in his bulbs and seeds, with the result that he felt, finally, quite at home with me and found his tongue. He spoke quite cheerily of the ups and downs of his business career and of the difficulty he had to make ends meet. His oldest son is a teacher of French in the United States and is doing so well there that he can send money home to his mother. Not to his *parents*, mark you, but to his *mother*. It is quite easy to see who is Chancellor of the Exchequer in that house.

ONE WHO PREFERRED FLOURISHES TO STRAIGHT LINES.

In order to show that the French nation is not entirely composed of artists, let me here mention a tale I heard from M. Verdin's lips as he tended the blossoms of his garden plot: "I hope," said he, "no son of mine will ever turn out to be an artist, for art is the most unsettling thing in the world and puts a man out of step with his fellow-citizens. Besides, there's little or no money in it. A brother of mine had a boy who was first-class at drawing and who was sent as an apprentice into an architect's office in Rouen. He would have

been a success at that, only he preferred flourishes to straight lines and let himself loose in the way of decoration. Now, you don't want too many curves and armorial bearings in an ordinary tradesman's villa. Leaving architecture he began to give his time and talent to wall-paper and to the invention of novel designs in chairs, tables, and sideboards. At the present time when so many people prize nothing except what's queer and complicated, there's great scope for every kind of wildness and novelty; so the lad I speak of obtained a situation at six thousand francs a year from a big firm of furniture dealers. But the evil spirit of art was fermenting in him and would not let him rest. He took to drawing waterfalls and hills and glens and such like things that are far better left as they are, for you can't improve on them with paint. This madness for landscape spoiled him for household gear, and, going from bad to worse, he commenced to "sleep in" in the mornings and the furniture folk couldn't depend on him. When they reprimanded him, he told them he was a *child of God*, and could only work when the inspiration was on him. So he lost his situation, and I hope his spurts of inspiration are procuring him bread and butter, but I have my doubts. Maybe there's some consolation in art that I know nothing about, but it's not easy to get on in this world without a little ready money. If I had my way, I would make it illegal for anybody but a rich man to tamper with scenery."

CHAPTER III.

MEN AND MANNERS IN PARIS.

A preliminary word of advice—Below the surface in Paris—Is Paris losing its old gaiety?—A "pension" in the Latin Quarter—A trio from the basin of the Danube—France and America—A slothful Syrian who neglects medicine—A melancholy Greek who loves contraband tea—The eulogist of Crèvecœur—Purgatory made pleasant—A discursive lady-lecturer.

A delightful critic of art and letters—A broad-minded theologian—His views on Christianity—Work and happiness—Modern patriotism—His views on ancestral pride—The service of humanity—The value of laughter—The description of scenery.

A dissertation on priests—Ernest Renan—Mysticism, the ultimate religion?—Two nuns in an omnibus.

"Exact Racine and Corneille's noble fire"—A tragedy outside of the Odéon—Surprises in a hydro—Baneful exhilarations—A sun-struck missionary and others.

On a wheel round the Bois—A vegetarian—To the palace of the Great King—Picture-gazing—Red and mauve—Baths and buttons in relation to genius.

French frankness—The principle of opposition.

A Luxembourg romance.

The merry Masons.

In the Sorbonne: The Dean's mixed audience—In love with the Pharaohs—An oath of a singularly tiny kind—French workers in British literature—Clean gone on Prometheus—Pensive citadels—A collision of wits—An Abbé from the Pyrenees who loved Scotch broth—The Dreyfus case in the Sorbonne—President Kruger on the Left Bank—Bohemia.

The *Doyen* of the journalists—Artistic reporting—The humours of the advertisement column—Bad boys.

A week's *causeries*: Monday: Illumination on the subliminal self—Tuesday: A logical dream—Wednesday: Reflections on the leaf of a tree—Thursday: Nocturnal terrors—Friday: On Nemesis—Saturday: Canophiles and Canophobes—Sunday: Whatever is, is right.

A PRELIMINARY WORD OF ADVICE.

It is not superfluous to warn the British tourist that he will find it advantageous to apply his mind to the study of French coinage. He ought also to procure a list of the Swiss, Belgian, and Italian pieces of money that have currency in France, and to bear in mind that some of the old French coins are now obsolete. Many of the tramway officials add considerably to their emoluments by insinuating bad money into the change they give to foreigners. Certain of these officials are believed to have a special pocket for illegitimate coins that they work off on unwary Britons. But even the most experienced rogue on the tramway staff may make mistakes sometimes and try to fleece the wrong man. It is not unusual to hear a passenger furiously asking the guard, "Do you take me for an Englishman?" and adding such an amount of contumelious Parisian *argot* as clearly proves the speaker is no novice in the French language. The guard is very humble in such circumstances and, as a rule, apologetically rectifies his blunder. He hopes for better luck next time. Cook's Tourist Agency will furnish the traveller with an illustrated slip that gives, in unmistakable form, the representation of all the silver pieces that are good. If the Briton

discovers among the change given him any of the non-authentic coins, he should protest at once, calmly but forcibly, and show that he is not to be imposed upon. Many of the guards experience a painful surprise when they are thus brought to book, and put on a look of injured innocence as if to say: "You are no genuine subject of the British monarch; if you were, you would not find fault with a poor fellow like me for trying to defraud you of a paltry silver piece of fifty centimes. You lower my opinion of your nation by looking so closely at matters so very trifling. The law is on your side, no doubt, but you have no nobility of soul."

It is not in tramway-cars alone that the unthinking foreigner may be duped. If he has dined in a café and wishes to pay the waiter out of a bank-note, he should clearly indicate aloud the value of what he tenders. I have known of cases where a note of one hundred francs was given and change handed back which would have been correct if the note had been one of fifty francs. A Frenchman assured me that such cases of fraud occur daily in certain cafés on the *Grands Boulevards*.

BELOW THE SURFACE IN PARIS.

Tastes differ mightily among men, and hence there are so many different points of view in the world. Thomson journeyed to Paris, stayed there for some days, and went *where*, think you? To the Louvre with its miles of superb pictures that date from the old primitives to the artists of yesteryear? To Notre Dame with its portals, towers, gargoyles, statues, altars, aisles, chapels, and dim religious light? To the Arc de

Triomphe which immortalises the victories of Napoleon, or to the Dôme des Invalides where the great Emperor lies, with his arms crossed, in everlasting sleep? *No*, to none of these did he go; neither history, nor romance, nor sculpture, nor architecture, nor painting, nor religion, nor any other feature attracted Thomson in the least. He spent all his time underground *examining the drains.* I have never been where he went, for my nose would not let me; but I gathered from him that he was very much edified by what he managed to see. Corresponding to the upper streets of the sunlight there are subterranean ones, named by the same names, and wherries go plashing along on the moving roads of liquid mire. Thomson was absolutely fascinated by the ramifications of this Parisian Avernus. I respect his curious taste far more than that of certain tourists who stupidly go poking their noses into midnight spectacles of dancing and revelry. The degrading influence of the devil is only too evident everywhere, both at home and abroad; and I cannot admire the state of mind of that tourist who, when there are so many great and noble things to view in Paris can waste any part of his holiday in the contemplation of garish and melancholy follies. The best things in Paris are good enough for me.*

* Browning went to an even more repulsive place than Thomson did. That great poet having (as he tells us in the piece entitled *Apparent Failure*) only *one day* to spend in Paris, walked along the Seine-side till he came *to the Morgue*, the sinister house where the dead bodies, recovered from the river, lie awaiting identification. What he saw is embodied in the poem I refer to. Nothing

One need not, however, be quite so sensitive as the worthy but too austere Scotch elder, who came back from the Paris Exhibition of 1900 with a sad tale of French depravity. In one of the avenues of the exhibition there was a model of Jonah's whale with a peep-hole for spying into the animal's interior. The Scot paid his fifty centimes for a peep, and beheld, to his utter disgust, that Jonah was portrayed, wine-bibbing, at a small table, in the company of a gauzy-vestured and very frisky mermaid, and in no way distressed about his mission to Nineveh. Perhaps many who read this will look upon the Scot's ire as legitimate. The incident is significant, but in no way impious. So ignorant are all classes in France of the details of Old Testament history that most of them lack even that knowledge of detail necessary for irreverence. I wonder how many French visitors to that exhibition could have given a synopsis of Jonah's career. One per thousand, at the outside, if you exclude the priesthood. I have my doubts even about the latter, for I remember seeing my friend M. l'abbé Pogue fall into a state of panic when I casually alluded to such a familiar Scripture character as Magormissabib. Let the British reader remember that the Bible has never become a French classic.

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could be more graphic than Browning's language, or, indeed, more gruesome in parts. Most people visiting such a place would have felt ill and depressed for a week after. He came away in a *violently optimistic frame of mind*, as is seen by the last verse of his poem—a verse which is continually being quoted in sermons of a consolatory nature.

IS PARIS LOSING ITS OLD FRENCH GAIETY?

A fine old gentleman, M. Moreau, who is proprietor of a small hotel in the rather dingy and dinsome Boulevard Marcel, told me the last time I saw him that, in his opinion, the Parisians have not such high taste in the matter of songs and music as when he was young. He especially regretted the fact that Béranger is no longer popular. "The songs you hear in cafés and music-halls to-day," he said, "are in every way deplorable. The words are poor and the sentiments worse. In the fifties, when I was going about Paris and amusing myself, the songs of Béranger, which are gay and clever and truly French in tone, were to be heard on every side. But," (he added with a smile), "Paris was really French in those days, and was not full, as it now is, of all manner of cosmopolitan foreigners who have depraved the general taste of the city and spoiled the entertaining vivacity of our concerts." Perhaps M. Moreau's criticism owed some of its severity to the partiality with which old men look back upon the days of their youth. Yet, it is true that Béranger is not a favourite among any class of the French nation at the present time. The peasants do not know him; the middle classes ignore him; the literary men damn him with *very* faint praise. The reputation of Burns at home, in America, and the Colonies, grows constantly greater; the world continues to sing "Ye Banks and Braes," "Auld Lang Syne," and the rest, with undiminished fervour. The fame of Béranger, who was unquestionably a poet of consummate art, and derived,

as Burns did, great part of his inspiration from love and patriotism, is pretty nearly extinct. You never hear anyone singing his airs on the street. Yet, in 1830, as M. Lanson informs us, he was the most popular poet in France. And Chateaubriand, who died in 1848, tells how impressed he was by hearing two sailors at Dieppe singing *Le Vieux Caporal* of Béranger:

> "Qui là-bas sanglote et regarde?
> Eh! c'est la veuve du tambour;
> En Russie, à l'arrière-garde,
> J'ai porté son fils nuit et jour."

It was the opinion of Chateaubriand that Béranger was far superior to Burns and all the other song-writers of Great Britain. The eulogy is absurd; yet it would not be easy to name (if a foreigner may venture to say so) any other French lyrist who so dexterously expresses the sentiments of the French *bourgeoisie* as Béranger has done.

It is in boarding-houses like that of M. Moreau that you meet samples of all Gaul at one table. The provincial Frenchman who has occasion to visit Paris on business does not frequent the new and expensive tourist hotels. He does not love to be jostled by impatient sight-seers and deafened by a babel of strange tongues. It is quiet comfort, national dishes, and familiar sounds that the man from the provinces desires during his sojourn in the capital. A Briton who stays in such a place and has enough French to understand the talk of the table, will pick up much interesting information of a miscellaneous character. The manners of the guests

are most agreeable and charming, and the conversation ranges over the whole domain of politics and social life. I heard illuminative discussions at M. Moreau's table on the luxurious living of the present age, the spread of irreligion among all classes, the prevalence of gambling, and the corruption of the Government. One guest from Limoges, who was a very devout Catholic and never missed the early mass, frequently expressed his utter disbelief in legislative morality. "When a man," he said, "becomes a politician and is elected to the Chamber, he has no longer any conscience. Politics is a trade which pays very well indeed. Our deputies used to get £1 a day for their alleged services; they recently raised their pay to £600 a year; but the fact is that owing to the perpetual opportunities for corruption, the £600 runs, in many cases, far beyond the thousand. Deputies are extremely amiable and obliging when they are interviewed by opulent individuals whose interests are affected by any proposed change of legislation." I expressed a hope to this citizen of Limoges that his statements were exaggerated, but he would not retract, and all the other guests declared he was right. I regret to say that my own declarations as to the absolute purity of the British House of Commons were received with a smile of compassionate incredulity. It was useless for me to assert that our Postmaster-General did not privately open the letters addressed to the leaders of the Opposition; these Frenchmen knew better.

A "PENSION" IN THE LATIN QUARTER.

Let me introduce the reader to a *pension* of a very different order, in the famous *Rue des Écoles*, not far from the Sorbonne. Students from all lands reside here for the purpose of learning the French language and benefiting, if possible, by the lectures delivered in the great University near by. There is no lack of gaiety in such an international haunt, but I am forced to admit that the conversation is sometimes lacking in spontaneity. All the guests know the rules and exceptions of French grammar, but the distance between that stage and the standard of colloquial fluency is unfortunately great. I heard one evening in the drawing-room a most remarkable talk between two novices, a New Zealand professor of law and a Pomeranian doctor of medicine. Their grimaces and contortions were painful to behold. After many futile attempts at mutual comprehension, the twain took refuge in Latin. How delighted they were to get into living intellectual touch with each other, albeit through the medium of a dead language! How the *quids* and *jams* and *quins* and *arums* and *orums* came rolling forth on the astonished air! All the other speakers, in alarm, ceased talking:

"*Conticuere omnes, intentique ora tenebant.*"

It was against the law of the establishment to speak anything but French, but what did the two care for law! They rose and left the room, arm in arm; they proceeded along the street to the nearest café (they had

not far to go for that); and there they sat till midnight, absorbing bock and pelting each other with Ciceronian idioms. The New Zealander told me next day that they had had a *gran' nicht.*

It would take the graphic pen of Chaucer to do full justice to the miscellaneous characters that the Latin Quarter attracts to its crowded and studious *pensions.* Some of the visitors make a very brief stay, especially if their first impressions are bad and their fatherland within easy reach. In the next few paragraphs I shall say something of the permanent boarders.

A TRIO FROM THE BASIN OF THE DANUBE.

Take a look, then, at the luncheon table of this typical boarding-house in the *Rue des Écoles* and observe the nationalities that are represented.

That big, fat, gruff man with the slim, girlish wife, is a Bulgarian doctor who is taking a winter's round of the Parisian hospitals. His name is the eminently suitable one of Krakoff, for his temper is of the surliest and he flies into a thunderous and glowering passion for the most trivial reasons. His irascibility, however, is not without a good effect on the menu and the landlady's cookery. Dr. Krakoff has a mysterious decoration in his buttonhole—a piebald little button of which he is very proud, and which, no doubt, gives him a high status in his native Sofia. Before coming to Paris, he had spent a year in Montpellier, studying the congenial subject of surgery. He rather loves to throw a terror on the company by describing, in his barbarous and ungrammatical French, the details of some of his worst cases. Though

he has no nerves himself, he is the cause of nerves in others. Everyone pities his wife, who is a gentle and timid creature, and can hardly have married her lord for love.

Beside Krakoff sits a young fellow-countryman, who is son of a Bulgarian banker, and is studying political economy and finance at the Sorbonne. He is a trim, fashionable young gentleman, speaks French with the utmost grace and fluency, and would pass for a Parisian so far as speech and looks are concerned; but his name has a "-koff" in it which betrays the Slav. He intends, by and by, to spend a year in London in order to gain a thorough knowledge of international finance. On becoming intimate with this agreeable and well-informed young Bulgarian, one is not a little surprised to find that he has carefully studied the works of Mill, Jevons, Cairnes, Marshall, and other eminent British economists.

There is a juvenile Roumanian in the company who keeps aloof from the Bulgarians and whom these two gentlemen detest (the word is not too strong) for reasons of race and politics. If you come to speech with this Roumanian he will tell you,

"With all his features gathered in a sneer,"

that the Bulgarians, though geographically in Europe, are really descended from a horde of barbarous and ignoble Asiatics who came from the far side of the Ural Mountains. "Every Bulgarian," he says, "is a savage at heart, utterly destitute of idealism, romance, and elementary poetic feeling. We Roumanians, on the

other hand, are, as our name plainly indicates, descended from the august stock of imperial Rome. In our veins flows the blood of the conquering legionaries. Our language has conserved the old Latin roots in a state of remarkable purity; our instincts and aspirations are akin to those of the Latin races; we look upon the French as brothers, and what is more . . . the professors of the Sorbonne love to see us attending their classes and rarely have the heart to fail us at the examinations. They have the same sympathy for us that they have for Canadian and Alsatian students."

Krakoff says that the Roumanians are *Romans, no doubt*, but Romans who are descended from the trash of criminals, who, in ancient times, were banished to the shores of the Black Sea for their felonious misdeeds. According to him, the modern Roumanians are worthy representatives of the stock from which they trace their descent. "They are the greatest scoundrels in Europe, are entirely incapable of amendment, and ought to be improved off the face of the earth."

After some months' experience of these three characters, one finds it easier to understand why the Balkan principalities are a constant menace to the peace of Europe. In these petty states the veneer of civilisation is very thin.

FRANCE AND AMERICA.

There are three young Frenchmen in the house who supply the fun and the effervescence. One, Jourdain, is a student of law, who hails from Marseilles, and lives continually in an atmosphere of garlic and boastfulness.

A true son of the south, full of incoherent enthusiasms and generous words! He carries a pistol in his hip-pocket, reads Tolstoi, frequents mid-night dances, makes love to the table-maid, and occasionally remembers that he has come to Paris for the study of law. Paradol, the second French youth, is studying for a military career, and is an orthodox Catholic. He has frequent disputes with Jourdain, so voluble, animated, and, indeed, acrimonious, that blows seem sometimes to be imminent. But it is all fun: one moment the two are scowling at each other most menacingly; the next, Jourdain, smiling graciously, is helping his antagonist to claret. Their talk runs largely on Socialism, on which subject Jourdain, in his rambling fashion, utters many wild and whirling words. Ten years hence, he will probably have made his peace with society and settled down to be a calm expounder of the Code.

The remaining Frenchman, M. Julien, is the only son of our landlady, and has been a disappointment to her. At school he did not take to his books, and no amount of tutoring did him any good. In Algeria, where he passed the time of his military service, he learned to trifle and tipple overmuch. At present he is clerk in an establishment for the manufacture of *pompons*, *i.e.*, those tufts of wool that ornament the soldiers' shakos. He is full of Algerian tales, which, if written down exactly as he narrates them, would make excellent copy for the printer.

The most self-possessed person at the table is a middle-aged American lady, Miss Amelia Appleton, a journalist. She can talk French even in its most

questionable argot, knows every corner of Paris as well as Baedeker, and will be put down by nobody. I do not know to what American journals she is accredited, but if she writes as well as she speaks, her articles must be marrowy reading. She is ready, at any moment, to formulate a definite and concise opinion on the most controverted topics, and give good reasons, too, for the faith that is in her. She frequently calls Jourdain a scattered-brain fool (un écervelé), and the young Marseillais, who is conscious that there may be some truth in the judgment, graciously pardons her at once. There is a rumour, which I can well believe to be accurate, that Miss Appleton contributes a weekly article on Parisian life to a newspaper in Chicago. It is rather disquieting to think that the careless chat of the table, the foibles and follies of the guests, and the most trivial happenings of the boarding-house, furnish material for Miss Amelia's typewriter, and are wafted over the Atlantic in order to supply mirth to the dwellers on the shores of Lake Michigan. I feel it right to add that she is well known among the American community in Paris and that she receives frequent visits from a gentleman whom she alleges to be her cousin. Dr. Krakoff, whom I have already mentioned, grins and shows his white teeth when Miss Appleton's cousin is mentioned: "Cousin, indeed!" he says, "I could give him a more appropriate name. The giddy old hussy ought to be ashamed of herself. I am sure she's fifty if she's a day." But the atrocious Bulgarian, whose highest thoughts attain no great altitude, induces no one to smile at his indecorous innuendos.

I have said that this talented American lady is highly respected by the French residents in the house; and yet I am certain they look upon her as an oddity and an anomaly. The fact that she comes from the Great Republic across the sea is, however, in French eyes, a pretty good palliation of her odd and unattached mode of life. Virtue in an American *may* coexist with irregular hours and a complete neglect of the observances formulated by the Comtesse Berthe in her *Politesse pour Tous*; but no such amiable supposition is permissible where French ladies are concerned. The extraordinary competence of American women, both young and old, to protect themselves when travelling abroad, is a very frequent subject of remark in France, and may lead, by and by, to a beneficial modification of social usages among the French themselves.

A SLOTHFUL SYRIAN WHO NEGLECTS MEDICINE.

An Armenian youth is of the company, the son of a doctor of medicine in southern Syria. Young Tortoliz, for that is the lad's name, is meant for his father's noble profession, and has been sent to Paris for purposes of study. The young man has no wisdom, but has the shoddy substitute for it which we call cunning. He is too much taken up with the gay and dubious allurements of the Left Bank to give more than a passing thought to the tiresome details of medicine. He arranges to be ill at the period of examinations, and the father, who does not fail to observe the synchronism, fondly believes the boy is injuring his health by over-

devotion to books. A terrible awakening is at hand for both. Meanwhile young Tortoliz is sprightly enough, and though his mirth has a background of uneasiness, he may probably show resource when the crisis comes. The father is decidedly to blame for having exposed the boy's untrained intelligence to the moral pitfalls of the French capital. Curious items of information may be picked up from the lad's rambling talk about his home near Jaffa. The young scapegrace is no believer in the genuine character of the conversions that the Christian missionaries get credit for. Such conversions, he cynically tells you, are really pre-arranged, for the Syrians are sly and look for advantages from all points of the compass. The numerous missions that are subsidised in the East by the home denominations give ample variety of choice on the part of the parents. "A Syrian father, say, has three sons, whom he wishes to be well educated on Western lines. He does not send them all to one school; he is too *rusé* for that. He settles that the first-born will be a Presbyterian, the second an Episcopalian, and the third a Methodist. Such a procedure ensures an accumulation in one family of all the spiritual and material blessings that are open for acceptance." For all his sneers, one can see, at least, that the amusing varlet has a genuine respect for the self-sacrificing men and women who are busy transforming the East. He speaks highly of the education given in the schools and colleges of the British and American missions. "I was at one of these myself," he says, "and learned to speak French and English. I did not always behave and was sometimes so insubordinate

and stiff-necked that the French teacher used to call me not Tortoliz but *Torticolis*."

A MELANCHOLY GREEK WHO LOVES CONTRABAND TEA.

One young man at the table is the perfect picture of an unhappy alien who would like to be at home. I refer to a Greek, Pappaphotinos, who hardly ever looks at anyone, and seems to be undermined by gnawing thoughts. There is a suggestion of melancholy and hopeless protest even about the way he chews a crust. He is olive-coloured in complexion, dark-glossy and handsome, and would be tall if he did not stoop. Everybody says he is touchy to a most absurd degree. One of the company who had been to see *Tartufe* at the Odéon Theatre, quoted some lines from that masterpiece at table, and our umbrageous Greek must needs take the verses to himself. It is a constant subject of grief to him that the word *Grec*, in the French language, means not only "Greek," but "knave" or "swindler." I felt inclined to try and find out if there was a sunny side to his nature. I invited him to have afternoon tea in my room one day, and he came, but with reluctance. The tea was English, and he got it strong, with two pieces of lemon floating on its fragrant tide, and no sugar. There seemed to be a kind of congruity between the sombre-hued Greek and the rich, dark tint of the citronised tea. He drank it with relish to the extent of five cups; it got round his wits and he found his tongue. He began by paying a very high compliment to the tea, which was superior to anything he had

ever tasted in France. "The French don't know good tea. I am sure," he said, "that blend came from England." "I bought it in Glasgow," I said. "Are you English?" he continued. "No," I replied, "*I'm worse, I'm Scotch.*" He laughed more heartily at my remark than it deserved, and said: "Well, it's very strange that we should come from extreme ends of the map of Europe. I hope you got that tea through the customs without paying duty. I would really enjoy another cup if you could assure me it was contraband." I told him it was really and truly dutiless, and, saying so, poured him out another cup. "You don't seem to be a great lover of the French nation," I remarked. "No," he said, "I am not. They are no friends of ours. No one ever made such a fool of the Greek nation as Edmond About in his *King of the Mountains*. How differently your great Lord Byron spoke of us! He was generous and sympathised with our aspirations." At this point he rose and recited with great feeling a modern Greek translation of Byron's lyric, *The Isles of Greece*. I saw a good deal of M. Pappaphotinos subsequently, and he was kind enough to teach me how to pronounce the modern Greek tongue by neglecting the vowel-lengths and laying stress on the accents.

THE EULOGIST OF CRÈVECŒUR.

Most of the boarding-houses in Paris that are frequented by English people have a visiting teacher who, if required, will give private lessons to any of the boarders in their own rooms. Many respectable gentlemen make quite a good living in this way, and have the

precious satisfaction of being their own masters. The visiting teacher associated with the boarding-house of Madame Vidal, in the Avenue Victor Hugo, is Monsieur Henri Armand, a hard-working literary gentleman, whose historical researches into the life and exploits of Crèvecœur have, up till now, been unappreciated by the thoughtless public. He has given his days and his nights to Crèvecœur, but it is heart-breaking to think that all his brochures on that genial hero remain unpurchased. M. Armand has been forced to fall back on the moderns for a living, having come to see that there is no money in the mediævals. I read and talked French with M. Armand two hours daily, for the space of three months, and can certify that, so long as he kept off Crèvecœur, he was the sanest and most delightful of companions. I believe I could write his life with a fulness that would rival in detail his own masterly pamphlets on that hero, for M. Armand was frankly autobiographical in his talk, and pursued every incident of his career into side issues and ramifications that might easily have been abbreviated without damaging the general effect of his narrative. He never tired talking to me of the Siege of Paris during the Terrible Year. During the whole "blocus" he resided in one of the narrow streets near the Odéon Theatre, lay in bed, indeed, most of the time, smoking, smoking continually to drug his horror-struck mind and drive away the pangs of hunger. "When an egg costs fifteen francs and a potato two; when cats and dogs are esteemed eatable, and fine ladies do not disdain the meanest of food; what wonder if people begin to think that God

and his Saints have fallen asleep?" His experiences during the blockade, the booming of the enemy's guns, the bursting of shells, the misery and starvation of the Parisians—all these he could narrate with a picturesqueness, at times too vivid to be entirely comfortable. M. Armand looked back with an admiring eye on the reign of Napoleon III. "We shall never have such times in France again. These were the days of pleasure, gaiety, and joy. The Emperor was a thoroughly good sort, but too much of a dreamer, and certainly no match for the Germans, who were always working below the surface, or for a man like Bismarck who could forge telegrams." "You do not think with Hugo that the third Napoleon was a charlatan?" "I do not," M. Armand would say. "Victor Hugo was, no doubt, a great poet, but he was the vainest man that ever lived. He could not endure that anyone should be emperor but himself. He is not the highest type of Frenchman. But yet what grand things he wrote and how well he made them pay. Alas, my Crèvecœur!"

PURGATORY MADE PLEASANT.

It grieves me a little to think that Catholics have avenues of consolation that are entirely closed to those of us who are attached to the principles of the Reformation. This fact was driven forcibly into my soul in the course of many a conversation with this worthy biographer of Crèvecœur.

I chanced one day to be reading with him a French imitation of Goldsmith's "Deserted Village," by Jacques

Delille, in which these lines are spoken of the old schoolmaster :—

> "Tout le monde l'admire et ne peut concevoir,
> Que dans un cerveau seul loge tant de savoir."

This set M. Armand a-talking of his own early life in leafy pomiferous Normandy, of the priest, the belfry with its hallowed associations, the village school and the class-mates of those vanished years. He was deeply touched by his reminiscences, and sat laughing and weeping by turns, or rather simultaneously. "Hardly a day passes," he said, "but some kindly thought, some genial memory of my native village arises in my mind. Pathetic incidents of the schoolroom, the noisy delights of the play-hour, jovial afternoons in the apple-garths, half-holidays on the strand (it was then that we out-roared blast and billow)—all these surge up in my imagination, and mingled with them are the faces of former friends that destiny has treated in very varied ways. The schoolmaster has long since passed away, and we, his pupils, are a dwindling band. Out of forty, only eight are in life besides myself. *Ce que c'est que de nous!* All the rest are where they should be, and some of them will need a deal of purging. Every year the survivors meet on a certain day in the old village and have a sumptuous repast. But before we sit down to our wines and feasting and souvenirs, *we proceed to the church* and get masses said for the souls of our departed class-mates. It does us good to think we may be easing them a little as they toss about on the fiery waves of Purgatory. Wiping our eyes, we leave the sacred edifice with a

feeling of satisfaction and hasten to our banquet. As a rule, we enjoy ourselves to the full, and make a regular day of it. The time will come when I won't be there and masses will be said for *me*. And let me tell you that when I am *yonder*, I shall preserve an interest in the calendar, and whenever I experience a special sensation of well-being, I'll know that the old anniversary has come round again, and that the priest is busy on my behalf. You Protestants were very ill-advised to drop Purgatory out of your creed. It seems preposterous that you should have nothing but an immitigable Hades to fall back upon.

"But to leave such a painful subject and revert for a moment to this life, I may say that I always feel improved both in mind and body by my anniversary trip home. My old class-mates respect me for my literary and historical researches, and no doubt believe I have coined money out of Crèvecœur. Though they are wrong, I do not seek to disabuse them. I feel, too, that my patriotic sentiments become more warm and vivid when I visit the place of my birth. Patriotism, like charity, begins at home. I love France, beginning from that spot of it that I knew first. How, indeed, can a man love his native country if he does not love his native village? I am prejudiced, of course, but I am convinced that, as regards scenery, the specimen of France which I had the privilege of viewing daily during the early and impressionable years of life, will stand favourable comparison with any district of the land. Inland, there are green and fertile hills, noble woods, picturesque streams, snug farm-houses and well-tilled

fields—a serene and proportioned type of beauty that is full of life and joy. And not far away there is the spacious and animated Channel, with its long miles of sands and the multitudinous dash of its waves. Can you wonder that my patriotism, which (speaking generally) is diffused on everything that lies between Calais and Marseilles, should gather itself up in concentrated form, when I stand under the shadow of my village belfry. And, needless to say, the historical interest is, to me, no less fascinating. Every district of my native Normandy is glorified by tales and legends of the past."

A DISCURSIVE LADY-LECTURER.

Let me allude here to a talented French lady, Madame Bouvier, of distinguished manners, who not only was wont to keep boarders, but lectured on literature to them as well. I hope she is still alive, and as busy as of yore in purveying mental and bodily nourishment for her clients. Her house was a noted resort of studious foreigners, who came from all parts of Paris to hear her glib deliverances. I fear I must say of Madame that she showed little system in her discourses. They were choke-full of unmethodised matter and quaint miscellaneous learning. I heard her give one of a series of lectures on the geography of France, and came away more dazed than edified. Her mercurial brain was entirely at the mercy of trivial and hap-hazard suggestions. She began with Louis XI. and his consolidation of the country, leapt on to the Revolution and the Napoleonic Code, touched on Corsica and its brigands,

passed over the sea to Tunis, returned by boat to Marseilles, and left her hearers, at the end of the lecture, in the desirable wine-growing regions of Bordeaux. Each discourse was a tissue of brilliant irrelevancy, but, nevertheless, far superior to a dry, systematic lesson. Madame was very erratic and very clever. She was a novelist, and one of her stories had the honour of being crowned by the French Academy. She paid for her gift of genius by utter inability to grasp the elementary processes of arithmetic. If she added up a column of money six times, she would hit on six different answers. It is not surprising, therefore, that her finances were in a chronic state of disorder. Madame was a widow and had one delicate little, white-faced, cripple girl named Pauline. Pauline was a spoiled child; she would sit beside her mother during the lecturing, interrupt her with childish questions about confectionery, and if not replied to, would limp noisily into a corner and sulk. The child had a very beautiful face, lit up with large, intelligent eyes. I hope Madame's fond care has managed to keep the frail creature in life. Their affection was very beautiful to behold, and would have appealed very strongly to the interpretative imagination of a Balzac or a Dickens. I observed, by the reports of the French newspapers, that Madame's street suffered greatly during the huge floods of January, 1910. It is to be feared that the attendance at her lectures would be seriously diminished then, for it needs capital to purchase boats and ladders.

A DELIGHTFUL CRITIC OF ART AND LIFE.

Another lecturer, whose walk and conversation filled me with genuine respect, was M. Rochette, who, when I knew him first, was cashier in one of the largest commercial houses of Paris. Other people's cash he could look after, but not his own. His life really began when he left the office. He was a profound student of art and knew every inch of the long miles of pictures in the galleries of the *Louvre*. M. Rochette gave lectures on the evolution of French painting certain afternoons in the week, and these I attended. A well-known M.P., an honour to his country and to the republic of letters, followed these lectures at the same time as I did. He cannot have forgotten any more than I have, the fluency of utterance, the wide range of illustration and knowledge, and the communicative enthusiasm displayed by M. Rochette in the course of these lectures. M. Rochette was tall, sallow-faced, dark-haired; his soul looked out upon you through glowing eyes; and he was *pretty often* half an hour late in coming to the class. But he was worth waiting for. I could not refrain from laughing, I regret to say, the first time I heard him. He seemed to me to have begun his lecture when he was in the act of opening the door, for he was speaking as he entered the room. Down went his leather "serviette" on the table, and for an hour there flowed from his lips a limpid river of speech that bore all manner of witty and entertaining things along in its current. I am sure some of the listeners were so magnetised by him and so busy looking at his mobile face, that they took in very

little of what he said. On Thursday afternoons we all went with him to the *Louvre* to see with our own eyes, by examination of the works of the various ages and schools, the truth of the artistic doctrines on which he had laid stress in his lectures. Our meeting-place was at the *Marriage in Cana*, the huge painting, by Paul Veronese, in the so-called Square Room. M. Rochette's imperfect notion of the flux of time enabled me to grave on my memory for ever more, all the pictures in that room, every one of which is a gem. When he did arrive, we all went off with him to hear his comments on Fouquier or the Primitives or Poussin or whatever artists were to be studied on the particular day. His invariable method was to connect art with literature and make them, so to speak, march to one music. No comedy I ever listened to was so bright and sparkling as the talk of M. Rochette, cashier, art-critic, and perfect gentleman. It was quite easy to lead him on to talk on such important matters as religion, philosophy, politics, and sociology. All critics of art are prone to let their thoughts roam widely, the most conspicuous sinner being the great Ruskin himself. As M. Rochette's digressions seemed to me to embody ideas that are widely representative of modern thought among his educated fellow-countrymen, I shall give a few examples. It was my custom to jot down the substance of his remarks when these were fresh in my mind, but it was not always easy to connect them in thought with the pictures we had been viewing. One of the first things I deduced regarding him was that he looked upon himself as

A BROAD-MINDED THEOLOGIAN.

"I have such a strong feeling of respect," he would say, "for almost all sects and Churches, that it is a matter of regret to me that, owing to the limitations of time and space, I can be in but one church at one time. The idea of Episcopacy is august and imposing; the Genevese Calvinist appeals forcibly to the democratic element in my nature; the Roman Catholic is to be envied in that he is largely relieved from the painful duty of original thinking; and I like British Protestantism because your good Protestant is a man who does think, or thinks that he thinks. What I most decidedly object to, however, is the pestilent proneness to persecution exhibited by all Churches when they have the power. The notion that any human being, speaking in the name of the Highest, should come and force me to get my soul saved, whether I desire it or not, according to his prescription, is, to me, preposterous, and not to be endured. *I may be led to Heaven, but I won't be driven.*

"When I meet a devotee, I feel an intense interest in him and should like to put questions to him for a whole day in a kindly and sympathetic manner. But if, instead of reasoning with me, he treats me *de haut en bas* and shows a tendency to scoff and deride at my heresy, I heave a sigh and leave him at once, believing him to be less of a Christian than I am. How eager every sect is to make a definition of Christianity that will exclude all the others! I would not deny the name of Christian to any tolerant man who lived a moral life

and had his mind open for more light. Humility, tolerance, and an honest love for truth constitute the genuine Christian spirit.

"It is a wise thing, when we feel inclined to attach too much importance to the disputes that reverberate around us, to open a manual of history and read a paragraph or two, here and there, throughout the volume. We shall find that every age has had its heats and turmoils, disturbing the public tranquillity, dividing communities into hostile camps, and occasionally causing the blood of combatants to flow like water. How puny and childish appear to us the disputes that raged in these bygone times! To those who lived among them, they seemed vast and crucial. The lesson to ourselves is obvious. Our contentions in like manner will one day seem trivial and superannuated.

"It is easy to give a lesson, but it is not so easy to take one. We laugh at the mad religionaries of old who quarrelled about the proper way to make the sign of the Cross. We think of the immensity of the universe and of the insignificance of such a religious broil. But in the consideration of *our own* disputes and schisms we are apt to forget that the universe is big and that we are on a small ant-hill in a tiny corner of it. We act as if our rushings and ravings were really of great consequence, and in many cases desire to excommunicate those who do not rush and rave along with us.

"The chief lesson to be learned from history is humility. And the humility which results from the contemplation of pride brought low, reputations forgotten, and doctrinal points neglected or derided,

should bear fruit, among the living, in a quiet attitude of sympathy and toleration. 'Let us,' as Voltaire says, 'since we are all children of one and the same God, live at least like brothers. Let us help to bear one another's burdens.' We are all marching on, bent under the load of our tribulations, and the chief solace that comes to us is derived from the sympathy and society of our fellows."

HIS VIEWS ON CHRISTIANITY.

"I believe Christianity is the best religion that has appeared in the world up till now, but it is desperately hard to follow its commands. The Church has been hard at work these nineteen centuries, with results that seem deplorably poor and meagre. Where is the man that loves his neighbour as himself? or is willing to sell all his goods to feed the poor? or turn his left cheek to the smiter when the right is smarting and tingling? I never met such a man. If Britain were a country of pacific Christians and ceased organising armies and building navies to defend herself from the foe that wishes to smite her, you would be in a sorry pickle before many months had passed. Bad as the world is, however, and hollow as our profession of religion may be, we should be infinitely worse without Christianity. The chief actual good of Christianity is that its tendencies all make for betterment in the practice of individuals, if not of nations. It teaches distinctly that good is rewarded and evil punished, and that all men are alike in the eyes of the Creator. Such a creed, even though but partly believed, has a tendency to make the

mean man less mean, the predatory man less greedy, the licentious man a trifle less impure. I may not be willing nor, indeed, able to love my neighbour as myself, but my religion may help me to give him a hand up when he is down, or cease to prosecute him ferociously in the emulations of life. I cannot see my way to sell all my goods to feed the poor (my entire belongings would not fetch much at an auction and I should miss them), but, in the name of Christ, I may buy a loaf for that poor beggar and take it personally to him, and give him some words of cheer into the bargain. As to submitting tamely to have a slap on the other ear; *no*; but after knocking the fellow down, the little bit of Christianity I have might keep me from dancing, pagan-wise, on his body. I do not in the least understand the text that enjoins us not to resist evil. I think it must be meant for the guidance of Christians during the millennium, when there will be little or no evil to resist. Present duty seems to point out the pressing need for resisting evil and crushing it out, first in ourselves and then externally. But all practice at present is a compromise between right and wrong. The true Christian is the man who labours to make the compromise less glaring and preaches the doctrines of the New Testament (unrealisable though these at present are), in order that an ideal may be held up before the world. Growth in grace is a perfectly intelligible term. It means slow improvement in the direction of the Christian ideal. Considering the possibilities of growth, *slow* is the correct word. He

who aspires to follow ideal teachings in their entirety *here and now* must at once retire from business to purely contemplative pursuits."

WORK AND HAPPINESS.

"Your countryman, Thomas Carlyle, declares that the wretchedest man on earth is he who has nothing to do. Work (he says) is the cure for all ills. The proposition is indisputable, but any work will not cure any ill, and there are kinds of work that are productive of mental and physical disease. Evidently the great point is to discover an employment that will cure and not kill. Work, according to the old theology, was God's punishment for sin; in reality, work of the right sort is the best cure for sin. That man has perfect felicity, whose whole soul is absorbed in his work. Such a one is leading a life of the utmost happiness and is to be congratulated, for he has found salvation.

"The conditions of the modern labour market do not render it very easy for the ordinary man to find full salvation, in the Carlylean sense. The division of labour, which has been so productive of material wealth, has caused, and is yearly causing, the death of thousands of souls. Consider that a pocket-knife that costs a franc, has been in the hands of twenty workmen before it is complete; each workman performs one and only one operation, and day after day, all the year round, he has the same monotonous and unvaried task. The result is that his mind becomes torpid and degenerate, seeing that he loses the zest and pleasure that

come from the employment of his faculties. If such a man lives at all, it is *outside* of his work. There is, of course, a great amount of monotony in every trade and profession. If one man performed all the stages in the manufacture of the knife, there would still be an element of monotony; but the modern tendency is towards the *total abolition* of variety. And, we may add, the total abolition of freedom too, for the man whose work consists in the indefinite repetition of the same act, in the same place and under the same conditions—what is he but a slave to his environment? He can do but one thing; he cannot gain a living at anything else; his doom is fixed.

"One cannot but feel a certain admiration for the gipsy who, scorning the regularity of toil and time, and the suppression of his individuality by the constraints of trade, goes forth on the highway and follows the unfettered bent of his nature. The artist and the poet have a kinship with the gipsy in so far as *they despise clocks*, and refuse to work against time and under supervision. Most genius is nomadic and restive under control."

MODERN PATRIOTISM.

"I do not greatly relish the aggressive speeches of those patriots who shout aloud that their country is the greatest in the world and their countrymen the best specimens of the human race on the face of the globe. Self-praise is no honour, and compliments come best from strangers. I reserve my admiration for the quiet species of patriotism that flourishes not in hyper-

bolical speeches and taunting jibes, but in honesty and wide sympathy. Patriotism, like religion, is by no means weakest in those who talk least about it.

"I know not but what the inventions of art and science will, by and by, destroy patriotism, and in more ways than one. The facilities afforded by the various applications of steam have brought within our borders an enormous number of alien settlers who have come here for what they can make, and who cannot possibly be possessed of patriotic sentiment towards the country of their adoption. Such aliens do not, to any great extent, become absorbed into the nation. Their object being a mercenary one, they would leave France without a pang if some other country offered a more lucrative field for their activities. At the first signal of danger the alien would flee away from our menaced frontiers. Those sentimental associations which are the basis of patriotism, cannot be formed in a single generation.

"Patriotism is in our day being undermined by another and even more deadly cause, and that is the growing solidarity of the working-classes all over Europe. Is not steam largely answerable for this phenomenon too? In every country steam-power has been applied to industry, and the value and independence of the individual worker have diminished. Machinery has caused a centralisation of power in the hands of few and a tendency towards the extinction of free initiative in the masses. Now, patriotism is inconsistent with a condition of servitude, seeing that the patriot must have something for which he is willing to fight, and that sentiment

about one's country implies a certain amount of independent and nourished citizenship. The chief concern of the worker in our day is to render his position less precarious by forming wide alliances with his fellows, both at home and abroad. He is becoming less of a patriot and more of a cosmopolitan. Unfortunately, the cosmopolitan spirit is grounded not on love for the foreigner, but on distrust of the French employer. It is believed that the latter may be intimidated by the prospect of international opposition.

"The position of Europe to-day is disquieting. Nations are not nearly so patriotic as they used to be, and they are *not ready* for the cosmopolitan stage. Never had religion such a chance."

HIS VIEWS ON ANCESTRAL PRIDE.

"Why should a man attach the slightest glory to himself on the score of birth? Do not by any means suppose that the aristocrats, as they are called, have a monopoly of the pride of descent. The foolish feeling of elation at the contemplation of one's forbears is common in every grade of society. It is highly interesting to know something about one's stock provided we can regard the thing calmly without any deep joy or sorrow, as something to be used not for puffing ourselves up with vain glory but for the purposes of moral amendment. If our ancestral record is good, our plain duty is to imitate those who have gone before and diligently refrain from the amusing weakness of boasting

over virtue that was in existence before we were born and for which we cannot be commended. Should the record be bad *we need not feel a bit hurt*, but merely recognise the duty of exterminating any seeds of wickedness we may find sprouting in our own bosom. I can quite understand that a man who finds a large proportion of courtiers and quarrelsome, predatory persons among his ancestry, should feel violent alarm, lest some of their bad qualities may have been transmitted to himself. The droll thing is that some modern aristocrats actually boast of their descent from rogues and villains. Such boasting gives proof of an extremely perilous state of mind and conscience.

"Is there any sane man, even in France, who could feel the slightest gratification at finding, on perfectly indubitable authority, that he was descended, say, from Napoleon I., a ruler who filled the earth with blood and ruin? If there were any choice (as there is none), I should prefer to be the scion of a race of weavers or cobblers. In any and every case, pride of birth is a sign of weakness.

"In modern times the noble families of Europe are feeling the misfortune of their position very keenly. The atavism that is in them tends to make them look for consideration and special treatment from the great bulk of the nations. But the prestige of a mere name is nowadays rapidly losing its glamour. More and more do we find that personal qualities are important, and that ancestry, however illustrious, stands in need of supplementing by these."

THE SERVICE OF HUMANITY.

"Even if there were no hereafter, it would be worth while living in this world for the great majority of men. Perhaps there are a few exceptional individuals into whose lives very little sunshine falls, but lengthening experience leads me to think that there is more happiness than misery in the lives of most. Life is really and truly a gift; even healthy animal existence is a pleasurable thing.

"Man seems to be in his right place in this world, and should concern himself more about the things of time than those of eternity. He should leave eternity to look after itself, or at least give it a very subordinate place. There is so much to do here, that Yonder, for the most part, should be left alone. We are sure of this world; of the next, not altogether.

"The service of God is the service of the Good. All those who have pondered on the subject of happiness have come to the conclusion that we are happiest when employed in good work, *i.e.*, God's work. The first dictum in our creed must be personal health, *i.e.*, the reverence and care of our own bodies. It is evidently impossible to do God's service aright unless we are fit workmen. Health and holiness are very closely akin. The healthy man is one who has the organs in fit condition. The avenues of his soul are thoroughly suited to receive messages from without. It is by means of the senses that the impressions of outer beauty come into the soul and give rise to the feelings of admiration and worship.

"As we strive to maintain our own mind and body sound, we recognise that others should also enjoy these blessed conditions. Intense happiness is to be found in aiding the realisation of conditions that will make for the healthy lives of others. The service of humanity is such a noble mission that all theology and theory are as nothing to it. Let this be our mission on earth, to procure health of body and of mind for ourselves and others, and by so doing we shall expel sin from the earth and pave the way for the Kingdom of God."

THE VALUE OF LAUGHTER.

"God has given us a very complex nature, self-sufficient, if I may say so, and consisting of tendencies that seem at first sight antagonistic—fear and courage, energy and sloth, belief and incredulity, and so on. A little reflection shows the necessity for both sets of tendencies, the great desideratum being to establish a correct proportion. Virtue, if we are to believe Aristotle, consists in steering a mid-way course. I do not think that the eminent Greek teacher laid sufficient stress on laughter as an auxiliary in the discovery both of virtue and truth. For a searcher after truth it is less dangerous to neglect logic than laughter. It is no exaggeration to say that laughter is the balm of God.

"Laughter conduces to health alike of mind and body. It differs from logic in being infectious. Cultivate laughter, therefore, to the fullest extent, and let it be of a healthy and unsatirical character. Let your good humour be of such a kind that people may not be unwilling to laugh along with you even at themselves.

If people are absurd, do not wallop them with syllogisms (nobody was ever yet converted in that way); do not sting them with the arrows of venomous sarcasm (that would be even more dangerous); no, employ the methods of genial and sympathetic mirth. Kindly laughter is the best antidote to absurdity. The consciousness of being ridiculous is the beginning of wisdom, only, that consciousness must not be too rudely awakened.

"As a general rule, avoid satire as you would the plague. Laughter invariably entails a mental or physical boon, often both; satire is the outcome of hatred, and does good to nobody. If you are *perfectly sure* you have to do with the devil in person or with a man who is possessed of one or more devils, you may then speak out, as satirically as you like. Such a case would, however, be strictly exceptional. You cannot point out in the whole realm of literature anyone who was habitually a writer of satire that was not soiled and worsened by it. Did Juvenal better himself or the world by elaborately castigating the excesses of his time? Most satirical writers have received more pain than they have inflicted on others. Scolding, however witty, is an exhausting business and one that invites retaliation. The latter, if witless, is none the less easy to endure.

"The satirists themselves feel qualms respecting their trade. They protest too much; they try to make out that their main object is the betterment of public morals; they affect the air of saints; while, for the most part, it is their own ill nature that they wish to satisfy. Satire does not amend, as a rule; who ever heard of a sinner being converted by a bitter line?

The chief effect of satire is to make the sinner a worse hypocrite than ever."

The reader may be surprised to hear that *all the foregoing remarks were delivered in front of pictures in the Louvre*, and were believed to be criticisms of art and its evolutions. I shall conclude my account of M. Rochette's opinions by an extract from one of his lectures really and truly dealing with Art.

THE DESCRIPTION OF SCENERY.

"Owing to the necessities of language and space, every description is a selection of features and is so far inadequate. Words, too, are so feeble to render a complete impression. The painter with his canvas, brush, and colours, has an immediate advantage over the poet, for he gives at once an irresistible and triumphant aid to the eye. A writer merely *talks* of green hills, blue skies, and white clouds, and leaves the reader struggling to build up the whole scene from the intimations given in a paragraph of feeble words. But the artist is on us with a flash, giving us the finished picture in all its tints, and saving us the labour of reconstruction.

"But there is a limitation to the artist's power, arising from the fact that much of the exultation we experience in the midst of fine scenery *comes from the pleasures of the ear.* The painter cannot give us the sound of the breeze that blows among the tossing branches of the forest; his picture gives us the form and colour of the wave, but not the restful and inspiring lullaby of its breaking foam; from his representations are absent the moving hum of insect and the jargoning

of birds on the wing. Who can deny that the glory of the open air is largely due to its multitudinous harmonies of sound? Every hill that lies gleaming in summer light is encompassed with melodious air. But the artist deals with light, not melody. He penetrates to our soul by the avenue of the eye alone.

"When poem and painting come to the aid of memory it is hard to say which is the more valuable. The painting has a time-limit to which the poem is not subject. And then words have a magic all their own such as paint is powerless to render. When a marvel of art is seen on a wall, we feel that the poet has still to say something about the scene before our contentment is complete. Why is it that the poet's phrases stir the heart so deeply? His strange powers of speech are needed to make us feel the divine glamour of nature and thereby transport us at once, without logic, beyond the frontiers of sense into the domain of mystery and worship."

A DISSERTATION ON PRIESTS.

In Paris you will find anything you look for, good or bad. As books are one of my chief delights, I love the left side of the river and the long miles of old-book boxes along the quays. It is a treat to saunter along from one stall to another, examining the several stocks, making a slight purchase here and there and conversing with the vendors, who are invariably affable and communicative. When tired, you can sit down on one of the benches of the foot-walk, light your pipe, and read the book or pamphlet you have just purchased. You

need never be dull of mind or lacking in subjects of contemplation, when seated thus, for should your pages be tedious, the river is there with its shouts and life, and the business of a great capital fills every street and bridge in your neighbourhood with the noise of traffic.

I never sit thus but I feel chagrined with Fate for having denied me the artistic pencil. *It is the priests I should especially like to sketch.* They form one of the most picturesque features of the Paris streets, and yet, how their distinctive attire and inscrutable countenances set them apart from every other type of human life! In this great city what an immense amount of good they do, incessantly and unobtrusively! They do not neglect the veriest rags and débris of society, but are to be found in wards of hospitals and disease-haunted hovels, solacing with holy words and sacraments the last moments of the dying. It is the spirit of Christ and only that which prevents society from reeling back into barbarism.

How I should like (by way of homage), in a few rapid strokes, to put down on paper that *quaint and saintly old priest*, bent with eld and wearily wearing a habitual smile of pathos, who comes along from a stall, clutching a large brass-clasped volume under his arm! I have never seen him before, and am never likely to see him again. But though I can't draw him on paper, I know full well that I shall *dream of him* for many a year. We are all subtle artists when we go to sleep; and that old priest will walk through the shadowy landscape of my dreams; and if he speaks, it will be in choicest

French, far better and more idiomatic than anything I could put together in my waking hours.

It is pleasant to note that a large proportion of modern French novelists deal in a very sympathetic and kindly way with the priest, especially the priest whose work lies in the rural districts of France. In the charming story *Mon Oncle et mon Curé*, the priest is an altogether admirable man, full of learning, tact, good-nature, and the spirit of the Divine Master. A more recent novel, *L'Ami des Jeunes*, gives us the life and thoughts of a city ecclesiastic whose parishioners belong mainly to the upper and middle classes. The latter novel, which is conceived in the form of a private diary, is replete with very droll and cynical matter. It would seem that, in Paris, a *society priest* derives great part of his reputation and popularity from his skill in match-making. M. l'abbé Pergame, whose autobiography constitutes the story, is constantly being appealed to by parents for aid in procuring suitable partners for their daughters. He conducts his marriage bureau with great skill and discretion, and is proud of the services he renders to his clients. How well the Roman Catholic Church knows the best means to make herself indispensable to every grade of society! Legislators may do their worst, in trying to separate Church and State: so long as the human race continues to marry and beget offspring and die, the Church will be needed to bless and console. Mankind feels the need of touching the skirts of eternity at the memorable occasions of life.

M. l'abbé Pergame, whom I referred to in the preceding paragraph, has some very touching allusions to

the lost sheep of the Catholic priesthood, that is, those forlorn wights who, after ordination, have fallen away from the state of grace and taken up some secular calling. "Many a time," says he, "I have seen one of my colleagues of the old seminary days, seated, whip in hand, on a coachman's box, conducting a mean horse and cab along the streets of Paris. Hands that were intended to shed heaven's benison on the faithful were reduced to drive passengers to the portals of indecorous mirth." The abbé goes on to tell that he was himself driven to the railway station once by an ex-ecclesiastic who had gone astray. "While the porters were taking my luggage off the cab, I turned to pay the driver. He took the money and I was proceeding to buy my ticket at the booking-office when he called out in Latin: *Memento mei sacerdotis.* I turned round in surprise, and he bawled out to me as he whipped his horse and drove off: '*I studied next room to you in the seminary.*' For some minutes I stood dumbfoundered and then I strove to recall the faces and names of my college associates. Out of the crowd of souvenirs, one figure stood out clear across the thirty intervening years, that of a tall, thin-chested, effeminate-looking fellow, whom we nicknamed *Monseigneur.* His ambition then was to be a bishop, and he was very sanguine of attaining to that high eminence. He had already chosen his episcopal arms, which were a star and a dragon, and a motto full of sound and grace. In his room he would practice, in front of a mirror, all the attitudes of a pontiff in the act of blessing. *It was he whom I had seen with the reins in his hand.* The cabman I had

tipped was one of my *confrères!* Alas, said I, that's what comes of our fondest dreams! A coachman's box instead of a bishop's throne! A whip instead of a pastoral staff! And what a mitre! Destiny is a humourist and there is one of her choicest jokes, i' faith."

Now and again the newspapers give prominence to some loose tale in which a churchman is involved. Seeing that, in the words of that most inconsistent of churchmen, William Dunbar,

"The flesh is brukkle, the fiend is slee,"

it would be strange indeed if the old Adam did not get the better of an occasional curé. But the infrequency of ecclesiastical backsliding is a good proof that the moral tone of the French clergy is high. Those whom I have personally known were all excellent men and hard workers.

Rupture with the Church often arises from other reasons than that of irregular conduct. New light in science and philosophy sometimes leads a conscientious man away from the traditional beliefs to which he has given an early and unreasoned adhesion. It has often been pointed out that some of the men who leave the Church become its bitterest and most implacable foes. M. Combes, for example, who was at one time in holy orders, was mainly responsible for the diplomatic rupture between the Vatican and the French Republic.

ERNEST RENAN.

One of the most delightful writers of prose in the French or in any other language is the ex-priest Ernest Renan. I cannot tell how often I have read his *Vie de Jésus*; I should think a score of times, and the book still retains its charm and freshness. It is pleasant, indeed, to turn from the immortal derision of Voltaire, full of the most vivid distaste for dogmatists of every kind (especially the intolerant and persecuting ones), to this courteous and cultured idealist who has been forced, it is true, to leave the Church, but is, nevertheless, *profoundly grateful for what she has given him*, and who casts many a longing, lingering look behind at the sanctuaries he has been forced, for conscience sake, to quit. A prince among men, who will not do violence to his soul by acting a lie and staying in the Church when he can no longer subscribe to her doctrines! I should not like to deny the name of Christian to such a man, for his life, which was pure and saintly, was largely the outcome of Christian influences. All his life through, he was a worshipper of truth, a lover of the ideal, a eulogist of faith, an advocate of toleration, a hater of persecution, a proclaimer of the necessity of unfettered enquiry. "Our religion," he says, "is a feeling that may be clothed in many forms: these forms are far from being of equal value; but *there is not one of them that has strength or authority to exclude the others.*"

In the little Breton town of Tréguier, where Renan was born, there is a monument in his honour, and oppo-

site this monument a Calvary has been erected as a protest. There is nothing inappropriate in such a juxtaposition; for no one was a more profound admirer of simple faith than Renan, no one more ready than he to bear witness to the consoling virtue of the Cross. But he was an apostle of what he conceived to be progress, and refused courageously to bind his soul in the fetters of dogma. Some who are fond of creeds and confessions look upon Renan's teaching as little better than the *moonshine's watery beams*. If love and tolerance towards men and reverence for God and truth be small things to inculcate, then he *is* a teacher of slight importance. But most professing Christians might sit at his feet with advantage.*

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* Occasionally in the peasant class, a great genius arises who speaks for a whole province and interprets the feelings of his race. In Scotland, Carlyle was such a one; Brittany became vocal in Renan. It is nothing to the purpose to object that Carlyle and Renan fell away, in theology, from the beliefs of their fellow-countrymen. The fact remains that the two men thoroughly understood the nature of the stock from which they had sprung and let the world understand it too. This is the character Renan gives to his province: "By the grace of God, *I don't believe pessimism will ever flourish in Brittany*. Our life and our nature are humble, it is true, but winsome, nevertheless. For my own part, I have never lost taste of life. It is a very lucky thing to be born into the world. I should like to begin life over again. . . . My ancestors were poor people, of good stock, obstinate, healthy, natural and fresh in their feelings, and *quite unspoiled by literature*. Had they been opulent and highly-educated, I should have been in my grave long ago. These good people did not leave me a big fortune, but I have from them that contentment which is better than riches. They bequeathed me their undepraved health, and *I think for them*. . . . I should like to write a history of Brittany in six volumes."

MYSTICISM, THE ULTIMATE RELIGION?

A few rare souls in this world who are gifted with exceptional spirituality find no need for forms and ceremonies and priesthoods, but get straight into touch with the divine by means of prayer and contemplation. The experiences of such persons are of the most absorbing interest and form, as it seems to me, a basis for the hope that mankind may one day, in the far future, arrive at one great universal religion. These contemplative souls or mystics, as they are usually called, merely possess, in a very high and special degree, qualities or talents or instincts which the ordinary man possesses in a rudimentary and undeveloped form. The mystic needs no proof of religion, that is, no intellectual proof, seeing that he has a spiritual sense by which he can shut out the world and commune with the Deity, as it were, face to face. Historical proofs are needless to one who is convinced that the Kingdom of God is within him. Some of the great mystics seem to have attained such a sublime state of spiritual exultation, self-forgetfulnes, and absorption in the divine, that the earthly *ego* was for the time being entirely suppressed or obliterated. "I and my Father are one" is the highest and ultimate cry of the religious consciousness: at that stage, definite personality tends to disappear in a kind of God-intoxication. The mystic is the supreme example of contemplative and ecstatic religion. The strange and the consoling circumstance about mysticism is that it tends to unite all religions. We find mystics in the religions of the East, in the convents of the Catholic Church, and in all the divisions of Protestant-

ism. There is a most striking similarity among all mystics, whether of East or of West, and they are, so to to speak, the cream of all the creeds. Their similarity may be imperfectly expressed by saying that they all seek for communion with God by self-relinquishment and by the assiduous cultivation of the divinity that exists in the soul of man. Mysticism, as has been said, is "religion in its most condensed form." The objections to mysticism are that it is intensely individualistic, that it works its results only on the few who have uncommon spiritual gifts, and that it does not require the apparatus of dogmatic ecclesiasticism. Some would regard these objections as powerful recommendations.

TWO NUNS IN AN OMNIBUS.

One day, in a Paris omnibus, I saw two nuns—elderly women they were, their bodies enveloped in ample and unlovely robes of black and their brows bound with bands of white. They both had a tired and sickly look in their face: probably they had been soliciting alms at many a door in the course of the day and were fatigued with their going to and fro. The collecting of subscriptions is never a cheery job. A mother and her five-year old girl were on the seat opposite the nuns. The child, a fine specimen, with blue eyes and bright, abundant hair, gazed speechlessly at the dark-robed women as at a prodigy. The look and demeanour of the young, fashionably-dressed mother, who had followed nature's way and was proud, as one could easily see, of her beautiful child who beamed like a star (as

Homer says), were in striking contrast to the air and aspect of the nuns. Exhausted and forlorn these latter sat, fingering their beads and muttering prayers with the object, I suppose, of keeping their minds away from worldly subjects of thought and concentrating them on the unseen. The little creature was intensely interested in the manipulation of the rosary, and began to fumble her fingers in imitation. One of the nuns, observing the child's action, was human enough to stop praying and indulge in a gracious and motherly smile. I am sure God was not a bit displeased at the interruption of the patter. But the other nun was violently annoyed at such weakness: she frowned and tossed her head as if in a huff, turned her back on the child, and went on rattling the sacred bits of wood and praying more furiously and ostentatiously than before. Sister *number one* felt the rebuke and coloured deeply. I felt sorry for the poor woman. The austere discipline of the nunnery had not crushed out of her heart the love and admiration for earthly children. It is not difficult to conjecture which of the two sisters pleased Heaven best. The Almighty has planted in every woman's heart a warm corner for childhood and a love for self-devotion that is fully repaid by youthful prattle and hugs. No immuring in convents, nor vows of service to the Mystic Babe, nor prayers to all the saints that ever lived, nor vigils, penances, and fasts, can countervail the importance of that practical worship which consists in devoted maternity.

"EXACT RACINE AND CORNEILLE'S NOBLE FIRE."

There is one building in the Latin Quarter that I muse on more than even the Luxembourg or the Sorbonne, and that is the Odéon Theatre. Outside and inside it is full of interest. If you know anything of that part of Paris, you will be aware that all round the Odéon there is a colonnade filled with the stalls of booksellers. There you can inspect books for hours together and greatly improve your mind at very small cost. The works of all the great dramatists whose plays are represented inside are to be had here at very cheap prices.

It is not easy, by studying French in England, to arrive at a correct appreciation of the French classic drama. Such study must be *supplemented* at least by a stay abroad. I have heard British scholars of high renown confess that they could not train themselves to admire the plays, *e.g.*, of Racine. The peculiar qualities which the French admire so much in that author, and which seem to intoxicate them with delight, are apt to elude the search of the English reader, who has been trained on the very different drama of Shakespeare. I have always loved Racine since I saw him acted at the Odéon. It is not merely that those consummate French actors, by their elocution, bring out the music and flawless versification of Racine's lines; but, in the course of the acting, you feel the vivid humanity and intense individualisation of every single character. The dramatic unities may seem to you stupid enough, but, nevertheless, *Phèdre* (you must

admit, after seeing it on the boards) is a thrilling masterpiece of art, in spite of the unities. "*Phèdre*" is not a mere name put at the head of certain passages of declamation: she is a woman, a most interesting and complex woman, whose every word and act on the stage proclaim Racine's penetrative and subtle insight into the human heart. No English criticism on Racine is worth reading unless it has been composed by a man who has seen the plays rendered by French actors. The English student ought not to waste time in a damaging contrast between the rimed alexandrine and our blank verse: people in real life express their sentiments neither in the one nor the other. Both are conventions, and both excellent in their way. Let him be catholic and try hard to enjoy the magnificent work of which each has been the vehicle.

Corneille, whose *noble fire* is eulogised by Pope in the line I have put at the head of this paragraph, does not, like Racine, require a long course of study and a mind responsive to Virgilian refinements, ere he can be adequately appreciated. He is the most Shakespearean of the French poets, in his breadth and vastness, and instantly appeals to all readers who can be touched by great thoughts and romantic grandeur. Such heroes as he portrays are not actuated by the small and grovelling motives of life, but by all that is huge, noble, and even quixotic. I have often pitied the actors who, after taking part in such a play as the *Cid*, and swelling out their souls to immortality by declaiming its glorious lines, had to go home and feed on the ordinary diet of men. Voltaire's devilish love for antithesis makes him

describe, in words that are prone inopportunely to be remembered when one is sitting in the pit of the Odéon, the ghastly contrast between the stage grandeur of the actors and the wretched poverty of their life and lodgings. Babouc, the blameless Scythian, is represented by Voltaire as visiting the theatre: "Two or three persons who looked like kings and queens make their appearance in the vestibule of this palace (*i.e.*, theatre). Their language was very different from that of the common people, being melodious, measured, and sublime. The duty of kings, the love of virtue, the perils arising from the passions, were expressed in strokes so lively and touching that Babouc shed tears as he listened. He felt no doubt that these heroes and heroines acted the part of preachers to the empire. As soon as the play was over, he wished to have an interview with the leading queen, who had declaimed a moral harangue, particularly pure and noble. He found that she lodged in a poorly-furnished apartment, on the third floor, at the head of a narrow staircase. Her attire was shabby and her words full of a noble pathos. 'My profession,' said she, 'does not provide me with the wherewithal to live; one of the princes you saw on the stage is a husband to me, but we have difficulty in facing the commonest crises of life for want of a little ready money!'" If all is true that is told of Corneille himself, we cannot exonerate the court of Louis XIV. from the infamy of allowing its great dramatist to shuffle about Paris in mean attire and unpatched shoon. Here is the translation of a sonnet which a modern writer has composed on Corneille: "In June, 1606, was

born the Norman, Pierre Corneille, who was (to mention but a few of his pieces), the author of *Cid*, *Cinna*, *Horace*, and the *Menteur*. He had a large nose, fine eyes, a simple mien, a proud soul, and was the noble father of our Tragedy. If he shewed some jealousy at the success of younger men, he had plenty of reason for being sad and surly. The holes in his shoon showed how abject was his poverty. He whom Madame de Sévigné declared to be a peerless writer, and who was great enough to give umbrage once to Cardinal Richelieu, passed his old age in solitude and neglect, and was often forced to make a sorry meal on scraps saved from the day before. The end came at last, and *Dangeau's Journal* has the note: 'We learn to-day that Corneille, poor old soul, is dead.'"

I do not think that Racine and Corneille, who have done so much to make the French mind what it is in respect of high-pitched sentiment and rhetorical taste, will ever be very popular outside of France. The praise they receive in France, let me say, is partly due to the feeling of patriotism. I have seen good Frenchmen *actually yawning* in the Odéon during a representation of Racine's *Britannicus*. But no one yawns when Molière is on the boards. Molière is God's gift, not merely to France, but to the whole civilised world.

A TRAGEDY OUTSIDE OF THE ODÉON.

One wet, cold, blustery morning (it was a December Sunday), I was hurriedly walking past the portals of this historic theatre, when I saw a most mournful and

pathetic spectacle. A man, accompanied by two children of tender years—a lame boy and a frail-looking girl—was following his wife's body to the cemetery. The father, a poor, thin-clad workman, looked utterly disconsolate, and all three were weeping bitterly. The rain was stinging them with relentless fury. It was a heart-rending sight, with which the leafless boughs of the Luxembourg, the desolate, rain-lashed streets, and the cold wintry air, were all in forlorn unison. "Surely," thought I, "the Odéon over there, amid all its imagined portrayals of woe, never presented a scene so touching as this." The tenderness of the French heart was noticeable in the beautiful and respectful sympathy with which the few passengers on the street saluted the humble cortège. Reverently uncovering, they stood in the gust-borne shower, mute witnesses of a sacred sorrow. It was comforting to the poor fellow to see that he was an object of compassionate regard.

Some soft-hearted and eloquent journalist must have been among the spectators, for next morning, one of the Parisian newspapers described the scene with much pathos and many vocatives, thus: "When you sit, my friend, in your easy chair at the fireside, smoking comfortably, and sunk in some pleasant reverie, it would be well to catch yourself up now and again, and give a thought to other mortals who are less happily served by fate. At every moment there is some one struggling with pain and illness, and the hours that fleet past joyfully to you are sore and slow in the chambers of the sick and dying. Think of that room where the life of

a mother is ebbing drearily away. The father and the children are gathered round the bedside, the tears streaming from their eyes as they look upon the worn and pallid face of the sufferer. The heavy shadow and the slow mystery of death are there. In the midst of your luxury and comfort, reflect that you too, some day, soon or late, will even be in the like case. Think, too, as you sip the wine, of the joyless day when the loved one is lowered into the ground, and when the place of tombs, and the sward, and the flowers of remembrance, all seem like the unreal phantasy of a dream to the stunned eyes of the mourners. It will take many a crisis in the long years of the future, to reveal the full extent of their calamity. I see that a gloom comes over your countenance and that your eyes are dimmed with a compassionate dew. It is well to intermit for a time the fuss of life, and learn humility by the contemplation of sorrow and the oncoming of the evil day. Who can see on the street the sombre aspect of the hearse without a pang of grief and a slackening of the pace that takes us on our worldly quest? Mourn with me for that hapless trio, and for their wretched home, now empty of joy. That cripple child would be sadly the worse for his toilsome walk to the cemetery. And the white-faced girl was ill-clothed for the chill rain of a December day. If there was no Hereafter, we should need, out of our imagination and our pity, to invent one, in order to compensate poor folk for their sufferings here."

SURPRISES IN A HYDRO.

I am pretty sure there is hardly a single reader of these pages who does not know something of Boileau. Everyone who has studied French Literature at school can name the poet's writings, criticise these quite accurately in text-book phrases, give a date or two, tell you that Boileau was very deaf in old age—in short, do everything except show a first-hand acquaintance with Boileau's writings. Let me add a little item to the heap of facts. In the district of Passy, once in the country, but now globed in Paris and well served with trams to the centre of the city, is a small, narrow street, called *rue Boileau*, containing the poet's house. In the same street there is a large Normal School, where they *do* read the *Lutrin*, and (more important still) there is a large hydropathic establishment, conducted by the eminent Dr. Rodet and a staff of nuns. As I do not wish, when in France, to be always rubbing shoulders with the tourist (who, as a rule, appears to better purpose at home), and as I love odd corners, illustrative of French life, I took the advice of a Parisian expert and settled in Dr. Rodet's place for a period of six weeks. The grounds were spacious, the table excellent, the baths well-organised, the nuns picturesque, and the doctor himself, a jolly good fellow. He told me many facetious anecdotes during my stay in his house, but never once mentioned the name of Boileau, the poet.

I did not know till I had settled with him, that one part of his place was set apart for the care and cure of those unfortunate persons who have allowed themselves

to come under the baneful dominion of drugs. Paris has many such degenerates, fools who, in seeking for voluptuous and novel sensations, have landed themselves at the Gates of Hell, sans health, sans will, sans hope, sans everything. I got a dreadful surprise on opening my window early, the morning after my arrival, to see half a dozen pale-faced, haggard spectres, like characters out of Dante's *Inferno*, trying to run a race along the leafy alleys of the garden. The doctor ran in front to encourage the poor souls in their exercise. His object was to strengthen the feeble knees, get some perspiration out of their pores, then apply vigorous friction to their skin, and finally plunge them into certain medicated baths. There was a dash of mind-cure in the doctor's system. He did not take away their drug all at once, but gradually lessened the dose until what he injected was pure water. When the doctor could say to a patient: "Your system is rid of the enemy; though you are unaware of it, my injection has been a pretence for the last fortnight," he usually added: "It is for you to complete the cure yourself; *go and sin no more.*"

BANEFUL EXHILARATIONS.

When Nature, in all her beauty, is always so near at hand, when a copper will take a man from the middle of a city to the edge of a forest, it is difficult to understand the folly of those poor wastrels who seek forbidden pleasures in the brief exhilaration of baneful drugs. I asked one of the pale-faced and forlorn victims if he could tell me *what he saw* in his visions, and expected

some rapt description of a Khubla Khan nature, full of icebergs shimmering in mid-sea under the Polar moon, Babylonian gardens with flowers and lanterns, damsels with dulcimers, and so on. His reply was unsatisfactory and lacking in detail. He merely said that he saw a *tas de choses*, a heap of things. There he sat on a garden-bench, dessicated in body and withered in mind, a bundle of hysterical nerves, ready to quiver if a breeze stirred the bushes, and all he could say regarding the stages in his long deterioration was that he had seen a *tas de choses*. A poor and miserable report truly! I never envied those who could find pleasure in De Quincey's morbid visions and unsubstantial pageants. (What a miserable-looking fellow the drug made of him! And how the vast intellect of Coleridge was palsied by the devil's own potions!) When there is no impulse in the vernal wood, no path of health across the moor, no flowers on the mountain, and no fish in the burn, we may begin to commit suicide with stimulants, *but not till then.**

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* Another form of poison which is alarmingly common in France, is that known as absinthe. Miss Marie Corelli dedicates one of her novels, *Wormwood*—

"À Messieurs
Les Absintheurs de Paris
Ces Fanfarons du Vice
Qui sont
La Honte et le désespoir de leur patrie."

The story is a very painful one, and is supposed to be told by one who is a slave to the pernicious habit. His farewell remarks to

A SUN-STRUCK MISSIONARY AND OTHERS.

There were other characters in the establishment with curious histories behind them. There was one solemn, square-bearded man, who had been a missionary in Madagascar, but who, in the course of his endeavours to bring the Hovis over to the Catholic faith, had been shot from on high by a burning ray of the tropical sun. The unfortunate sunstroke had deranged his wits, but he had lucid intervals when he discoursed volubly enough. The nuns called him *le père missionaire*, and looked upon him with sympathy and respect. Even during the brain's inaction, he had, as it were, an instinct for holy things, and would sit for hours with a prayer-book on his knee, vainly endeavouring, as it

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the reader are of a singular character: "I am a thing more abject than the lowest begger that crawls through Paris, whining for a sou. My aspect is so vile, my body is so shaken with delirium, my eyes are so murderous, that if you met me by chance in the daytime, you would probably shriek for sheer alarm. But you will not meet me thus—daylight and I are not friends." One *absintheur* has made notable contributions to French poetry—I mean Paul Verlaine, whom English readers know through the fine translations of Mr. Ashmore Wingate. Some of Verlaine's verses are extremely beautiful, but the beauty is of an unnatural and saddening sort, like the unhealthy roses on the cheek of a consumptive. Mr. Wingate writes of Verlaine and his poems with great sympathy and penetration, but it is difficult to shed a tear over the grave of a man who spoiled a subtle and delicate brain by ignoble excess. That neurotic verse which seeks after new thrills, or sets itself to fix, in vague words, the passing dream or "brain-wave," is the literature of degeneracy, and is never likely to meet with much encouragement in Great Britain.

seemed to me, to get some sense out of it, and turning over the same leaf again and again, as if trying hard to make the last line of one page connect in thought with the first line of the next. At other times you might see him on his knees before the images of the saints that decorated a quaint little chapel in the garden. I hope the Blessed Ones understood the purport of the poor soul's ill-formulated prayers, and have not allowed his malady to progress into a night of utter unreason.

The ordinary Cook's tourist, who is taken about in brakes to the Louvre, the Luxembourg, the Sacre-Cœur, Notre Dame, and Versailles, sees Paris very systematically, but he does not see much either of the variety or the tragedy or the comedy of French life. Here, in this hydropathic, you have health and sickness, happiness and misery, all concentrated, and living side by side. One of the guests saw the devastation in Martinique, and can tell tales of Mount Pelée that would make you shiver; another is a Finn, whose hatred of Russia is fierce and unquenchable. Paris, the cosmopolitan and the fascinating, is well represented too. Over the walls of the garden come sounds of youthful mirth and laughter. Ask the doctor and he will tell you that these proceed from a Jewish boarding-school of three hundred girls. That fact, too, is significant. The children of Israel are so numerous and, indeed, so influential in France, as to cause genuine alarm among some of the patriots. There are even newspapers that frankly proclaim after their title that they are *anti-Israelite*.

ON A WHEEL ROUND THE BOIS.

In the springtime, or in the season of early summer, when the trees on the boulevards are green, Paris is at its best. The tourist, whose residence lies near any of the great parks or public gardens, should shake off dull sloth and go a-promenading in the early hours of morning. My own plan, when I chance to be staying near any of the great Gates of the Bois de Boulogne, is to rise betimes, hire a bicycle, and wheel my leafy way round the entire circumference before the hour of breakfast. Such a nine-mile circuit, through the fresh morning air, that rings with the music of whirring songsters, is unspeakably exhilarating, and procures an excellent appetite for the coffee and roll of the first French meal. The great wood, with its broad avenues, placid lakes, and swift-seen vistas of dewy glade and lane, sparkles and glances with colour of every kind. Cavaliers are early astir, both civil and military. In the course of a morning's run, you may see half a dozen French generals galloping their steeds through the shade and sunshine of the glorious paths. Especially does the blue tunic of the hussars make a pleasant contrast with the verdant tints of the foliage. It is a good thing to dismount now and again, and slowly absorb all the rapturous joys of the scene, and quench one's thirst with a couple of oranges, purchasable at some of the stalls on the confines of the wood. Despite the advice of the guide-books, which do not counsel early rising, I consider that the morning is the best time for the *bois*. The afternoon brings the jostle of ten thousand

carriages, but the heat and dust of that time are enemies to comfortable freshness. At seven A.M. there are no carriages to block the alleys, and the ladies who are wont to come out in the afternoon, holding their parasols and dressed in gay and many-tinted toilettes, are still asleep. An hour or two in the wood, before the business of the day is begun, is an excellent tonic. When, on your saddle, you pedal out of the kingdom of leaves by one of the gilded gates, and find yourself in the stir of the great city, you are, like Goldsmith's Frenchman, "pleased with yourself, whom all the world can please." You will not lose your good humour, though you have to wait half an hour for breakfast.

The poet Sophocles, in olden times, sang the glories of the fair groves of Colonus, in one of the finest choruses of the Greek language. Noble steeds, gardens dowered with all beauties of the ear and eye, wings fluttering among the branches, sumptuous fruitage ripening to the core in many a sheltered nook, flowers of every hue, stanchless fountains of living water: all these are celebrated in the splendid lines of the matchless old dramatist. The Bois de Boulogne is in no way inferior to the fair groves of Colonus. What are the French poets thinking of that they neglect to poetise this noble forest? It would not be difficult, by a few modifications of the Sophoclean chorus, to make it applicable to the French Wood. Such lines as the following would require no change:—

> "*Love's fair goddess in her car* is seen,
> A gleaming shape amid the foliage green;"

even the references to "Blithe-hearted Bacchus and his gamesome train" would be quite appropriate to-day. Monsieur Cain, the eloquent writer on Parisian byeways and odd lore, gives, in one of his chapters, a summary of the romance that attaches to the Bois. The various topics to which he alludes, would furnish material, not merely for a chorus or two, but for a veritable epic. He tells us that the modern fame of the Bois dates from the reign of Napoleon III., the author of so many Parisian improvements and amenities. M. Cain's book gives a lively picture of Napoleon III., in 1867, riding in state along the alleys, an object of admiration to the Empress and "*le petit prince souriant de la daumont impériale.*" *There* was a boy, whose short life was well-filled with tragic incidents, meet for a poet's handling. It is many a year since he fell under the spear of a savage, but his mother is alive still and may sometimes be seen in the Bois de Boulogne.

A VEGETARIAN.

In some of my early promenades in the wood, I used to meet a very sprightly Frenchman, an affable, middle-aged gentleman, who seemed to take a great interest in everything around him. He might be seen strolling leisurely round the lake-paths, examining the flowers, listening appreciatively to the songs of the birds, or sitting on a bench, in a sunny corner, absorbed in complacent rêverie. One morning he graciously saluted me as I passed him, and in course of time we came to be on talking terms. He was a naturalist, after the school of

White of Selborne, and was inexhaustible on the topic of birds and foliage. I never saw him save in the wood: what he did during the day I cannot tell. He deserves notice because he was the only *French vegetarian* I have ever met, and also because of the exaggerated nature of his self-content. "There is no man in the world," he said to me one bright June morning, "with whom I would change places, and none that I envy. I am happy every minute of the day, and sleep as sound as a top at night. My brain is clear, my muscles in excellent tone, my eyes of the same focus, and my teeth unpurchased. I spring out of bed at 6 A.M., leap gaily into a cold bath, dry myself with the roughest of towels, and proceed to certain gymnastic exercises of my own special invention. Thereafter I linger, sippingly, over a tumbler of cold water. After that pleasant duty, I sally forth for an hour or two's walk. My breakfast is of the simplest kind, consisting merely of milk, toast with nut-butter, a tomato, apple, peach, or pear. I have discarded the insidious poisons known as tea and coffee. My first meal keeps me going till the hour of noon. I have never the slightest sensation of fatigue during the interval. The sinking feeling referred to in books of medicine and quack advertisements, is one to which my stomach is an entire stranger. Lunch, for me, means a glass of hot milk and a bowl of vegetable soup, nuts, raisins, and dry toast. I laugh at those dyspeptic fools who make the stomach a sepulchre for dead animals. The kindly fruits of nature are enough for me. He who must needs be rending the flesh of

sheep or ox, is an enemy to his own earthly happiness, to put it no higher. I am always light, songful, and buoyant. Dinner is simply a repetition of the mid-day menu—a backbone of nuts, sprinkled with milk, and a variety of wholesome vegetable juices. I eat with deliberation, and enjoy every morsel: the fifteenth bite is very much sweeter than the fifth, let me say, and *tanto quanto*. In the evening I never fail to walk six miles. I desire you to be assured that I have the utmost delight in this part of the day's programme. I cannot but pity those poor wights who, neglecting the use of their legs, get themselves driven about the country in motor cars. For invalids, and those who are in a hurry to keep an appointment, a motor may sometimes be valuable; but I cannot understand why anyone, whose members are sound, should wish to be driven away from fine scenery at such a rate of speed. To go through the beauties of nature at three miles an hour is reasonable. There is so much to admire in the landscape of our woods and gardens, that I feel it my duty to proceed deliberately and leisurely. It was very thoughtful of Nature to plant such fine prospects within walking distance of my home. I feel greatly indebted also to those gentlemen who, at enormous expense to themselves, have embellished the country-side, and aided Nature in her attempts to please me. My raptures are simple, elementary, and lasting, and, really, Heaven will be no surprise to me, for I have it here already."

TO THE PALACE OF THE GREAT KING.

Voltaire, in his fascinating work *Le Siècle de Louis XIV.*, declares that there are only four epochs in the history of the world worth the detailed study of civilised men: the age of Pericles in Greece, the Augustan age at Rome, the Rénaissance in Italy, and the reign of Louis XIV. We might add to, but could not subtract from, that list. Voltaire chooses these periods because they are preëminently distinguished for their great men —geniuses, who enriched their own and all succeeding generations with the undying glories of the intellect. "*Tous les siècles*," he says, "*se ressemblent par la méchanceté des hommes, mais je ne connais que ces quatre âges distingués par les grands talents.*" The best preparation for a visit to Versailles is a perusal of those vivid and wondrous chapters, in which the consummate art of Voltaire traces the history of the brilliant court of Louis XIV., with its renowned generals and statesmen, its immortal poets and orators, its gorgeous pageantries, hospitalities and splendours. Baedeker will give you the size of the rooms, the dates of constructions and additions, and other most necessary and interesting details; and for these let us be thankful. But the atmosphere needed for a truly edifying visit to Versailles, is best supplied from the living pages of Voltaire, and the inimitable letters of Madame de Sévigné and Madame Maintenon. If you can read a play of Racine, or, better still, see it acted the night before, so much the better.

Full of Voltaire, then, and refreshed with the nec-

tareous coffee of our French breakfast (Voltaire confesses that much of his inspiration was due to coffee), let us drive to Versailles, through the sparkling air, by way of the Place de la Concorde, the bright greenery of the Champs Elysées, the imposing Napoleonic Arc de Triomphe, and the sunlit alleys of the dewy Bois. Let there be no haste, for the best outings are those in which you do not wish to hurry to your journey's end, but enjoy every inch of the progress thither. Do not envy, in your hired victoria, the sheeny equipages and costly motors that pass you on all sides. They are there for you to look at. Remember what Ruskin said: that the more real beauty became multiplied in the world, the greater was his personal pleasure. *A beautiful thing*, he said, *is as much mine as the possessor's, provided I get a look at it; the more there is to admire, the better for me.* It is good for a man of moderate means to cultivate such a disposition. I am grateful, therefore, to the opulent people of Paris for treating me to such a splendid display of wheeled vehicles. I enjoy the look of them, *ergo* they are, so far, mine. The syllogism may be faulty; but its conclusion is nearer the truth than the vaunt of Louis XIV.: *L'état, c'est moi.*

Here we are at the gates of the Great King already! In the spacious court is the mighty Louis XIV. himself, on horseback, high raised from the ground, and flourishing a sword. That is the monarch who, as Macaulay's schoolboy knows, obtruded himself so persistently in English history; who supplied money for the lusts of Charles II.; welcomed the banished James II. to

France, and gave him the palace of St. Germains; drained purse and country in vain attempts to checkmate William of Orange; and died, at length, baffled in war and disillusioned of glory, a prayerful and humble penitent. He looks well on that steed of bronze, with the majesty of the great palace behind him. Salute him for his love of literature, and pass inside.

PICTURE GAZING.

The picture galleries of Versailles have this admirable feature, that the rooms are all well supplied with windows, so that when you are tired of looking at the paintings, you can turn your back upon them, and solace the eye by taking a feast of real landscape. Scores of people, typical of all classes of French society, move about from picture to picture. There, a schoolmaster, with a few pupils, is giving a little lecture on French history, before some scene of battle. Here, some article of furniture or piece of choice tapestry is being critically examined by one who is probably a virtuoso. Evidently there is a humorist among that little knot of peasants over there, examining a fine painting of "The Field of the Cloth of Gold," for the rustics are laughing merrily. As he, who is the spokesman, makes frequent references to *Barbe Bleue*, it is probable that the character of Henry VIII. is being made the subject of sarcastic comment. Bluff Harry, with his beard of ruddy gold, is always a subject of jest with Frenchmen. In their own kings they pardon much: who, indeed, could have pleasure in dwelling

upon the sins of that handsome and romantic Francis I., who encouraged art so much that his smiling face is in every museum, especially as he took his defeat at Pavia in such good part, and was so lamented during his last illness?

Outside, the sun dazzles through the leaves, and makes the great park, with its lakes and wonders of gardening, almost unbearable with heat and light. In a shady nook of the garden you can see a group of visitors, English and American, who have had enough of pictures, and who stand round a refreshment-stall, alternately mopping their brows and drinking various kinds of tinted sirops and liqueurs. Such a sight is fatal to the attractiveness of "The Field of the Cloth of Gold." It is essential now that we descend for a drink and a stroll on the lawns. Besides, the mind must not be dazed and confused with too many pictures. We can come back some other day.

RED AND MAUVE.

I was much struck, during my first visit to France, by the large number of men in the street who wore decorative buttons or ribbons in their coats: the red of the Legion of Honour, or the mauve of Public Instruction. I have often heard it said that a red bit of ribbon is equivalent to a knighthood, a red button to a baronetcy, and a mauve ribbon to a permanent vote of thanks for some service rendered. There is an unseemly eagerness for these bits of colour, and the newspapers are constantly poking fun at the candidates. Old

Henri Rochefort wrote a very funny article some years ago, *Decorations for All*, in which, with his usual sarcastic vigour, he accused the Government of attempting to win adherents in the country by trading on the voter's greed for ribbons; and further suggested that a special order and insignia should be invented for the domestic animals. The higher decorations, like our own knighthoods, are frequently given for genuine services to letters, commerce, art, or science; sometimes they merely prove, as with us, that the recipient is a man whose voice or purse commands respect in the dinsome sphere of politics. There is a strong suspicion, among the better-class French people, that favouritism and bribery are quite as effective as merit and genius, in the procuring of these distinctions. As to the so-called Educational Officerships, it may be said that education has, very frequently, nothing whatever to do with them. Actresses, dancers, and imperfectly educated persons are often presented with them. I knew an *Officier d'Académie*, in Paris, whose knowledge of French Literature and syntax was notoriously imperfect. It is most regrettable that honorary titles, conveying an implication of scholarship, should be given, for electioneering and party purposes, to persons who have little or no education. The value of such titles becomes of small account to the really meritorious recipients. Speaking generally, I should say, though with some hesitation, that the French are rather vainer than ourselves in the matter of titles and decorations—a fact which seems to indicate that our brilliant neighbours are not, as yet, completely republicanised.

In a recent issue of a popular Parisian magazine, the French Minister of Education is represented sitting in his bureau, surrounded by his clerks and assistants. "Gentlemen," he says, "I intend to examine minutely into the qualifications of all candidates who aspire to be decorated with the academic palms. How many such candidates are there this year?" A clerk informs him that there are 454,627 aspirants, and hints that there may not be sufficient time to investigate all their claims. "We *must take time* to perform what is our duty to the State," says the minister, "let the candidates be introduced, one by one."

The first candidate is M. le comte de la Gagatière, who wishes the academic decoration because the mauve ribbon looks well on the black of an evening suit. The count has already one or two colonial distinctions, and desires, for aesthetic reasons, to figure as an educationist. The minister has not the heart to refuse him the three inches of ribbon.

The second candidate, Colonel Ramollot, bases his claim on the argument that, being an officer in the army, he ought also to be *officier d'académie*. The minister recognises the justice of the claim and decorates the gallant colonel.

A personal friend of the minister next comes forward, and shouts aloud for the *palms*. "But thou hast them already," says the minister. "Why dost thou ask them a second time?" "At present," says the friend, "I desire them for my tailor to whom I am long in debt and who becomes insolent. The palms may allay his impatience." The minister, yielding to the

noble impulse of friendship, consents to decorate the tailor.

The fourth applicant is an illiterate fellow who keeps a low drink-shop, and who brags that he can sway five hundred voters at election times. The minister, without hesitation, gives him the academical *rosette*. The publican, out of gratitude, expresses a hope that the minister will step in for a gratuitous dram some day soon.

The next person to appear is a chorus girl, Mlle Tata Grenouillette, whose claims meet with immediate recognition. "I am delighted to think, mademoiselle," says the minister, with a gracious smile, "that it is in my power to be able to do something to encourage an art like yours, the tendency of which is to refine, and educate the public taste." He at once leaves his seat and gallantly sees her to the door.

The only candidate who is rudely received is a venerable and erudite schoolmaster, who has been engaged in the education of the young for the long period of five and thirty years. The minister frowns indignantly at the applicant, and dismisses him with a contemptuous wave of the hand. "What cheek!" he says, "a pedantic fellow like you to think of being decorated! If we began to give academic palms to mere schoolmasters, we should have none left for other people. No, sir, I refuse your application."

"*L'audience continue*," says the journalist in conclusion.

BATHS AND BUTTONS IN RELATION TO GENIUS.

When decorations and titles are the reward of personal merit, as, in spite of jocular journalists, they often are, every devout man must applaud their bestowal, seeing that homage is thereby being paid to Heaven, from which descends every good and perfect gift. To put a little red button or ribbon on the coat lapel of a genius, is, properly speaking, an *act of worship*, for genius is directly due to divine grace and is not man-made. In Britain, the worship of God-given genius has, unfortunately, become associated with *baths*, *garters*, and phraseological balderdash, unbefitting the solemnity of a religious rite. But the whimsicality of buttons, ribbons, baths, and garters ought not to obscure the important central fact, that such trifles are symbols, used to mark off the *élite* or, in Calvinistic phrase, the *elect* of the earth.

Certain circumstances of a rather awkward kind have arisen to complicate the highly-desirable marking of geniuses. The real genius is *such a tease* that he frequently won't come forward: in France he often refuses the button, and in Britain he will, at times, run off and prefer to do without baths and garters altogether. Again, an important percentage of non-geniuses, under the impression that they can make their calling and election sure by methods of purchase, are willing to part with half their goods to get some mark of distinction. It was discovered not long ago, in France, that a place in the Legion of Honour could be obtained by flagrantly dishonourable means, and cases have been cited of men

buying decorations in order to please their ambitious women-folk. Some able financiers believe that our own Imperial Exchequer might be sensibly enriched by the establishment of a systematic tariff for titles of honour. Those meritorious persons, who paid nothing, could make a statement to that effect on their visiting cards, or Whitaker, in his Almanac, might be authorised to give the official prices of each. In some such way, the comparative merits of the recipients could be conveniently assessed. It is a matter worth the consideration of the legislature whether *noblesse* should not become obligatory on a man, when his contribution to the revenue overpassed a certain figure. A Bill for the *Automatic Levying of Titles* by the Income Tax Commissioners, might secure greater veracity in the returns, and so work wonders in augmenting the figures of the national revenue.

For self-evident reasons, every grade of distinction should stand on its own feet. A poet, for example, who would get his title for nothing, should hardly be made a baronet, for that would involve the implication of genius being hereditary. Imputed righteousness is a doctrine that should be left to theologians exclusively, and so should the doctrine of imputed *un*righteousness. It is noteworthy that in France, decorations are in no case transmissible to descendants.

FRENCH FRANKNESS.

The Frenchman is not, in our day at least, a great traveller. France itself is such a glorious country that he may well be pardoned for taking his holidays at home. He might go further and fare much worse. Of late years, however, one more and more encounters in the steamers and hotels of Western Scotland, bands of French tourists, talking in animated fashion, as is their wont, of scenes and people here, so different from their own. Many of these tourists display an ignorance of this country as great as the stay-at-home Briton shows of theirs. One young Frenchman, whom I met on a steamer in Loch Linnhe, thought that all our western lochs became solid with ice in the winter months. I hope our friendship and intercourse with France will develop more and more, for the two nations have much to learn from each other, and probably we the most.

What strikes the Briton, in his first contact with French life and literature, is the absence of reticence, and the amusing frankness and vanity of the national character. It is taken for granted everywhere that France is the one great home of civilisation and nursery of the arts, that French literature is the richest and most varied since the beginning of time, and that French is the one modern tongue comparable with those of insolent Greece and haughty Rome. As a Briton, I feel that some of these vaunts need toning down; yet I admire the patriotism of the Frenchman, and heartily join with him in lauding the vast contributions of his country to the progress and enlightenment of the world.

I should like to see French literature, which is undoubtedly well suited for cosmopolitan purposes, make a conquering progress round the world.

Puritan Englishmen (and most Englishmen have, happily, something Puritan about them), are sometimes shocked, when they stroll along the Parisian boulevards, at the titles and illustrations of books and journals they see exposed for sale. French frankness, it must be admitted, does assume a rather objectionable form at times. But do not let us assume that a few loose books and pictures indicate national degradation. Nor ought we to assume, in stupid self-complacency, that we are, in any important respect, much better than our neighbours, for we are not. Residence in France among the French, enables one to eliminate not merely the personal, but the national, equation in looking at things; it enables one to estimate the enormous influence of tradition, climate, usage, and religion, in forming present-day public opinion, even in the domain of morals. It is a kind of education to learn that righteousness varies its form somewhat according to sun and latitude. Let Britons abroad remember the text that refers to the mote and the beam.

The amazing frankness shown by French novelists and play-wrights in the handling of social questions, which to us are repulsive, is quite in keeping with the traditions of the literature. Owing to the peculiar genius of the French language, it is possible for a dexterous writer to tell an offensive tale and give very little offence. The same story, told in English, would be intolerable. Art, wherever present, gives some plea-

sure, and one need not, in this sinful world, be too fastidious. My sympathies are, however, entirely with those artists who choose cleanly topics, who portray the great emotions of the soul in a chaste, cheery, and helpful manner, and whose influence, in sum, contributes to the betterment of the world in the widest sense of the word. To be of high tone, a novel need not be a sermon. Not a few French novelists have degraded their craft by taking, as their subject-matter, themes that, I think, would be far more appropriate in manuals of medicine or criminology. Such men are public pests and should be entirely neglected.

Our novelists, as a rule, are rightly chary about trenching on the domains of squalid science or criminal psychology; and the advantages are all on our side. How lucky the British father is in this, that the best, most entertaining, most heartsome, and most artistic novels in the English language, are also the cleanest, and do not need to be locked past from the young people of the family! In the pages of our greatest novelist, Charles Dickens, we have the admirable combination of broad humanity, rollicking humour, and scrupulous purity. I have been told by French fathers that they have no objection to any English novel coming into the house, but that French romances needed careful sifting. I hope, for the sake of our national health, that our novelists may never lose the high reputation they have gained, of ability to be merry without outrage to modesty. The object that every teacher of literature should set before him, is to bring his hearers into contact only with what is noble,

healthy, and stimulating. With such qualities French literature is abundantly provided.*

THE PRINCIPLE OF OPPOSITION.

Does the reading of bad and unsavoury books *always* exercise a deleterious influence on the mind? Before answering such a question it is necessary to remember that there is a certain "principle of opposition" in most men, which leads them, in many cases, in a direction

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* The following dedication by Edmond About, to his daughter Valentine, which is placed at the beginning of the *Roman d'un brave homme*, is altogether fine:

"My dear child, your fifteenth birthday will soon be here, and I am offering you for that occasion a literary posy of simple truths and natural sentiments. You may read the book that contains them from beginning to end, and I fondly hope that, by and by, you will go over it with my grand-children. In it they will learn many a thing that you already know better than most people, viz., love of country, love of the family-circle, a passion for what is right, the sentiment of justice, a respect for work, a belief in the common brotherhood of rich and poor, learned and ignorant, possessors of nothing and possessors of much, quite unimportant people and people of *vast* importance. In all likelihood, your children will have a much easier life of it than I have had. Their good luck will have its perils, and care will be needed to prevent our stock degenerating into idlers. If any one of your children should ever, by an unlucky chance, show a fear or an aversion for work, you may tell him how often you saw me, when you awoke in the morning, hard at work over the manuscript of this book, and how often, at night, when you went to bed, you left me alone, busy, with the pen in my hand. And, if ever silly vanity should poison any chick of your brood, you may point out that the author of this book (and the hero of it too), had, for ancestors, none but folk who were poor, humble, and of low estate."

contrary to the author's intention. In olden times, Spartan boys were taught to love sobriety, by being shown degraded people in a state of helpless intoxication. It must be remembered, too, that many of the authors used for high educational purposes the Latin and Greek classical writers, and our old dramatists are studded with passages dealing with human infirmities. Many of these passages may be usefully perused, on Spartan principles; but there is always a danger that the art and beauty of the language, by giving pleasure, may prevent the desirable reaction of loathing with respect to the subject-matter. Then, too, the original sin of the reader may be notably worsened if his mind lingers too much on unwholesome details, even though, as in theology, these details are associated with denunciation and warnings. In my opinion, all literature of an unedifying kind, should be kept from young people; and I think it unfortunate that so much rubbish, both secular and sacred, should be put into the hands of the rising generation.

On the other hand, we may err by excess of care. A French writer tells us that, on one occasion, when storm-stayed in a Swiss mountain-inn, he could at first find but one book in the place wherewith to solace his leisure. That book was a treatise on *Duty*, by Jules Simon, a book of high tone and strict precepts. He read it most carefully, and found himself becoming wickeder the more he studied it. The spirit of contradiction was on him. Thoughts of murder, theft, and arson, took possession of his soul, simply because these and other sins were so mercilessly condemned by his

text-book. He began to wish the weather would clear up and the snow melt away, in order that he might inaugurate a career of unbridled crime. By good luck, however, he chanced to light upon a stray volume of Paul de Kock, and that was the means of bringing him back to thoughts of righteousness.

It is good, both for old and young, that virtue should not be associated with boredom and sermonising. How often do we hear it said in Scotland, that excessive strictness of upbringing produces the most deplorable results! The ideal state of mental health is that which finds the literature of squalor insufferably wearisome.

A LUXEMBOURG ROMANCE.

He was an employé in one of the branch Post and Telegraph offices in the Latin Quarter, and had, on certain days of the week, a spare hour, which he employed strolling about the Luxembourg garden with a cigarette in his mouth. After the enervating click of instruments in his office, the twittering of birds was a reposeful thing. The Luxembourg is, indeed, a garden of delight, with its statuary, its military bands, its fountains and miniature lakes, its open-air bakeries, and Punch and Judy shows. Should the weather be threatening, the Museum is hard by, containing some of the finest statuary and pictures in the world.

It was a pleasure to the hard-worked clerk I speak of, to observe the children sporting in those leafy retreats, sailing their tiny skiffs on the pond, and playing hide-and-seek round the weather-beaten statues of the old French sovereigns. The nurses and attendants did

not greatly attract him, because they were old, it being the custom, in France, to entrust children, not to giddy and frivolous maids, but to women of mature years and, if possible, forbidding aspect. Now, it happened one day, that he perceived a little girl of four in charge of a bonne of nineteen, and the sight made him open large eyes of wonder. He had been resting on one of the benches, reading a poem of Musset (for he had a poetical soul), when, glancing up from the page, he saw the maid and the child. He read no more that day.

The child, let me say, was Scotch, and the mother, unskilled in the wise, traditional French practice, had engaged the bonne—a Swissess, Mathilde Goyar—to walk out with the little girl. Mathilde had represented herself to the lady as newly come from Switzerland to Paris. The deceitful creature had really been in Paris for several years, and in successive situations all over the city. But she was very dexterous in assuming the simple and ingenuous air, appropriate to the girl fresh from the chamois-haunted mountains, and would say at times, "Oh that I had been in Paris at the time of the Great Exhibition!" The truth is that she had been in Paris during the whole duration of it.

Our young telegraph clerk introduced himself to Mathilde one day, when she was walking with her charge in the neighbourhood of the well-known bronze statue of "Silenus and his Donkey." He had no difficulty whatever in establishing an amicable acquaintanceship with her. Time but the impression deeper made. And so it came about that Mathilde and her swain promenaded almost daily in the Luxembourg alleys.

If the child came to no harm, Providence, and not the bonne, deserved the credit.

The telegraph clerk, though he saw Mathilde so often, felt the need of writing long letters to her, in order to dissipate any doubts she might have regarding the extent and ardour of his exalted devotion. He also established a system of signals, founded perhaps on the Morse alphabet, which he employed from the street in the direction of the bonne's window. Her replies were less artificial in their nature and were conveyed by the simple expedient of waving towels. When Mathilde was out in the company of her mistress he would follow the two, spaniel-wise, up and down the street, and would cast a rapturous glance of affection at the girl, and some significant signal, whenever he had the opportunity. Sometimes he had to pull himself up quite suddenly, in the midst of his pantomime, to avoid detection by the lady. But he had very adjustable features, and could instantaneously replace a look of deep and moving love by one of blank and expressionless unconcern. Mathilde's romance was known to almost everyone but the lady. The concierge used to laugh heartily at the young fellow aiming his open-air telegraphy at the nursery window. The servants were all in the secret, and when Mathilde showed them her postal swain, cutting his elaborate capers on the pavement below, they assured her it was Destiny, and that no one might, could, or should struggle against that. She had, to tell the truth, not the slightest desire to begin an unequal contest with Fate.

One day, when Mathilde had got leave of absence for

an afternoon, the Scotch lady went forth with her little four-year-old to enjoy a stroll. Suddenly, and for no apparent reason, the child clutched her mother's robe nervously, and exhibited symptoms of terror and amazement. On being asked what was wrong, the child, who had been strictly charged by Mathilde not to tell her mother anything, was silent. But the mother insisted, and coaxed the child till she got an answer: "I'm frightened for Mathilde's friend. He meets her every day in the garden. She told me never to tell you about him. He went past us on the street a little ago and made grimaces at me. I'm frightened he runs away with me. Don't speak to Mathilde about it or she'll give me to the *charbonnier*."

The lady at once went home and proceeded to ransack the maid's chest of drawers. It was indelicate of her to do so, no doubt, but then her curiosity was roused, and curiosity is too peremptory for etiquette. In the first drawer she opened, she found a great bundle of letters, full of such ardent paragraphs as seemed more like the composition of a Son of the Tropics than a telegraph clerk in a European city. The lady had a sense of humour, and could not but smile as she quickly skimmed over pages and pages crammed full of "groans that thundered love, and sighs of fire." The fellow had a pretty wit and a fluency of language that would have done no discredit to a member of the French Academy. No wonder the bonne's head was turned by his honeyed words. There was another bundle of letters that indicated but too clearly, what a deceiver Mathilde had been when she said she was a stranger in Paris. She

had been in ten previous situations in the city. The lady replaced the letters and went to her own room to think.

Her reflections were not pleasant. It was quite evident that Mathilde was a deceitful and scatter-brained huzzy, utterly unable to look after children. It was also quite plain that the clerk was infatuated to the verge of craziness. Probably he carried a revolver on his person and might use it against anyone who essayed to thwart his purposes. Scarcely a week passes but the French newspapers give gory details of some tragedy of love and hate. The lady determined to leave Paris at once, proceed to Lausanne for a short holiday, and dispense with Mathilde's services in that town. From Lausanne to the bonne's native village, was no great distance. In this way Mathilde might be restored to sanity and calm.

Mathilde was astounded when she heard of the Lausanne project, but was reassured when she was informed that the lady intended to return to Paris after a very brief stay in Switzerland. No sooner had the lady arrived in Lausanne than she paid the bonne a month's money in advance and said: "I give you a two days' holiday; go and visit your aunt in the canton of Vaud, and leave me your address there." Mathilde left, and the lady returned to Paris next day, after wiring Mathilde that she had no further need for her services. It was the lady's hope that if Mathilde were planted down at home, she might forget her attachment to the telegraph clerk, or that he, with his great stores of burning adjectives, might neglect her for some one

else. On her return to Britain, the lady wrote to the Swiss aunt for news. It was a disquieting letter that came in reply. Mathilde had left home for Paris and nobody knew where she had gone. Probably one *faux ménage* more had been added to the thousands of such that exist in the French capital.*

THE MERRY MASONS.

It pains me to say that among orthodox Catholics in France there is a violent prejudice against Freemasonry. Why it is that a craft or association which declares itself akin to the guilds of mediæval masons, who went about building abbeys and churches, should be so distasteful to Rome in our day, is at first somewhat of a puzzle. At least five papal bulls have denounced Freemasonry. The Catholic journals are never tired

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* The attitude of respectable French people to the *faux ménage* is not one of lofty and contemptuous deprecation. They do not see much wrong in these alliances, provided the parties conduct themselves in an honourable way. There is even a very strong feeling that disabilities ought not to attach to children, in any case. For the benefit of the poorer classes in Paris, it would be well to make marriage more popular than it is, by simplifying the preliminaries and reducing the cost to a minimum. I refer, of course, only to the *civil* aspect of marriage: religion, within her own domain, will always have something to say.

Modern society, being founded on the family-contract, everything that tends to make the family relationships insecure must be regarded as detrimental to society. In Britain, throughout the whole nation, we rightly feel a very strong prejudice against disorder and informality of every kind and degree. The French think precisely as we do, and yet they exhibit puzzling tolerations.

branding Freemasons as pantheists, devil-worshippers, and secularists. The Briton in France soon becomes aware that the genial mystifiers, whom in his own country he has learned to venerate for their loyalty to one another, their philanthropic readiness, and their judicious hilarity, are very different indeed from the Freemasons of the Continent.

Good-fellowship is the watchword of British Masonry, and the grips, passwords, and ritual, give a certain piquant jocularity to the business. In France, the Masons have become overwhelmingly political. The secrecy of the lodges gives the members ample opportunity for discussing affairs of State, and the various branches throughout the country, which are all closely in touch with one another, in reality form a militant confederacy, which, since the fall of the Empire, has become increasingly ambitious and influential. The leaders of the Republic have over and over again utilised Masonry in their wars with the Church. The policy of the Lodges has been willingly shaped towards humiliating Catholicism, secularising education, and controlling the government of France. The Catholic and the Freemason are consequently implacable foes: the former regards Masonry as a secret society of unscrupulous freethinkers; the latter can see no patriotism in one who takes his cue from Rome.

A few years ago it was discovered that General André, the War Minister, was beholden to the lodges for much of the information he used in deciding on the promotion of officers in the army. It is hardly credible, though, unfortunately, true, that the private life of the

officers, their attendance at mass, the demeanour of their wives, the political colour of the newspapers they read, the kind of education they gave to their children, were all spied into by secret agents of the Masonic Lodges, and the results, couched in language of the grossest impertinence, put under the eye of the Minister of War as a guide to him in his schemes of promotion. The existence of this elaborate system of espionage was revealed by the *Matin* and other French newspapers, through the treason of an official belonging to the Grand Orient Lodge of Paris. A loud and justifiable outcry arose throughout the country as, day by day, the journals published the unsavoury details of masonic delation. The Government defence was that the army must, at all costs, be kept true to the Republic, that dangerous influences had to be exterminated, that the State had to deal with wily, ecclesiastical adversaries, and that delation would cease.

IN THE SORBONNE: THE DEAN'S MIXED AUDIENCE.

The lecture-rooms of the Sorbonne are open to the general public, and the privilege is appreciated to the very fullest degree. No more miscellaneous crowd is to be seen anywhere than in the benches of this famous temple of learning. If the professor is a man of outstanding note, all available space will be taken up long before the lecture begins. People may even be seen standing in single file outside his room, as at a theatre-door. Once in, do not fail to take a look round the audience and note its motley character. Ladies of beauty, rank, and fashion, sit side by side with the

queerest, dowdiest, and wrinkledest of old crones. The black cassock of the priesthood is very much in evidence. Should you be sitting in the back row of the raised amphitheatre, you will behold quite a constellation of tonsures. Nor will it escape your notice that Bohemia is well represented too. Young fellows of careless and jocund mien, who never visit the barber, and whose garb is free, ample, and loose-fitting, lounge on the seats, observe the ladies, and sharpen their pencils in view of possible notes. Some of these youths are redolent of tobacco, others of garlic. Americans, observant and all curious, are present, male and female, and amid the whispers of French, you can hear the nasal and self-confident articulation of the Great West. At last the lecturer enters and mounts the platform, amid applause. It is *the Dean himself* we have come to hear, M. Croiset, a great favourite, a profound scholar and an eloquent speaker. He is a thin, vigorous, sharp-eyed, kindly, well-groomed gentleman, and he is giving a series of lectures on Homer. Before beginning his discourse, he moistens his throat with a sip of *eau sucrée*.

> "And when he speaks what elocution flows,
> Soft as the fleeces of descending snows!"

His subject is Helen, and in the course of his remarks he reads the passage in which the feeble old men of Troy, garrulous, and thin-voiced as crickets, babble about Helen's beauty and say it was no wonder Paris stole her away. The audience is completely carried away by the Dean's rushing tide of eloquence. Perhaps

many of them do not know a word of Greek. Yet, they all leave the room, profoundly touched and inspired by the splendid harangue to which they have listened. Homer has got round their hearts and bewitched them, through the medium of an enthusiastic interpreter.*

IN LOVE WITH THE PHARAOHS, ETC.

Not all the class-rooms of the University are so well-attended as those of *Monsieur le doyen.* Lectures dealing with the annals of France and the history of art always attract great crowds. Nor is philosophy unpopular with the public, for M. Boutroux, whose

* It seems to be an understood thing in the Sorbonne that the public may enter or leave at any moment of the lecture. In some of the rooms there is a continuous movement of people all the hour through, with much shuffling of feet, butting of elbows, and tumbling of umbrellas. The constant opening and shutting of the doors is rather enervating to those sitting in the rear of the hall, by reason of the noise, and the succession of draughts that wander along the passage. I am afraid that some of those who attend the public courses come in, not to increase their information, but to chat with their chums and have shelter from the inclemency of the weather. Over the way, in the College of France, the ventilation is, if anything, worse, the rooms being smaller and older. If a visitor, bent on making good use of his time, can select hours at which the audience is not too large, and the subjects to his mind, he will be amply paid by attending; for the professors, though they differ in eloquence and popularity, are all men of great erudition and rare expository skill. They do not make the mistake of being too systematic in their lectures: one session, an obscure author will be taken and worked up with great detail; the next, nothing but broad outlines and wide literary vistas will be given.

subject embraces the deepest problems on which the human mind can exert itself, is always sure to have a large audience. It used to surprise me to see the *Egyptology room* crowded with listeners, all evidently interested in the ups-and-downs of the Pharaohs, as expounded by a fluent specialist. A queer old dame used to follow this class most assiduously and never missed a dynasty, of which, as everyone knows, there are not a few. She had a wonderful appetite for hieroglyphics and for the mysteries associated with

"Osiris, Isis, Orus and their train;"

but, unfortunately, being dim of sight, she could not make out very well all the beaked creatures and domestic animals that the professor sketched on the blackboard as samples of the prose, poetry, and familiar correspondence of the ancient Egyptians. Rising from her bench, and leaning heavily on a stick as she hobbled painfully along the floor, she would request leave from the professor to inspect at close quarters the elegant extracts of beaks, wings, and paws, which he had drawn for our instruction. It was intensely droll to see her, when permission had been politely accorded, peering patiently and long at the significant barnyard literature that had been saved from the maw of devouring Time, and returning, again and again, with nose almost touching the blackboard, to examine some beak or claw that seemed specially full of thought. I had a reverence for this old soul and believe her to have been eccentric, but not necessarily crazy, though she made such a hobby of

hieroglyphics. She was to be seen pretty often in the library of the University writing out long extracts from a variety of learned works, and drying the ink with sprinklings of sand.

On almost every occasion that I visited the library, I saw a grave and reverend old scholar with a great pile of portly volumes, busily engaged, as if it was a matter of life and death to him, in some laborious and lengthy quest. Morning, afternoon, and eve, he was to be seen knitting his brows over what, probably, were the conflicting views of learned authorities. I used to wonder what were the affairs of moment that chained him so long to his chair. Could it be Hittite inscriptions? or Greek particles? or (more exciting still) the Evolution of Moral Ideas? After he had tussled long with a number of deplorably thick tomes, I saw him one day, like one inspired, hastily seize a pen, and begin writing what I felt sure was a complete and final account of the problem he was investigating. I could not resist the temptation of insidiously stealing past him and looking over his shoulder. What I saw made me drop the book I was carrying. He was simply writing out, time after time, in large round half-text, as if for a school-prize in penmanship, the well-known English line *Lead, kindly light, amid the encircling gloom.* After recovering from my surprise, I felt consoled and edified by the line. In almost all our philosophical and scientific investigations, the net result *is* encircling gloom, and we are, indeed, fain to fall back on Goethe's prayer for *more light.* Surely such accession of light will come, if not here, at

least hereafter. To predicate disappointment and annihilation of

> "Grey spirits, yearning with desire
> To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,
> Beyond the utmost bounds of human thought,"

would be an impious calumny on the Creator. We may reasonably expect that our present struggles will be rewarded, and that the encircling gloom will finally be blown away.

AN OATH OF A SINGULARLY TINY KIND.

It was a treat of a particularly refined character to sit in the English class-room of the Sorbonne and hear the late Professor Beljame lecture on Shakespeare. Our great dramatist is, unfortunately, rather strong meat for the majority of Frenchmen; but Beljame loved him with an overpowering passion. His favourite quotation was from the first scene of "All's Well that Ends Well":

> "Love all, trust a few,
> Do wrong to none; be able for thine enemy
> Rather in power than use; and keep thy friend
> Under thy life's own key."

(Aime tout le monde; fie-toi à peu; ne fais tort à personne; sois fort contre ton ennemi plutôt en puissance qu'en acte; et garde ton ami sous clef dans l'intimité de la vie.)

M. Beljame had the faculty of making even philology humorous, in a mild and lambent way. Why, indeed, should a professor, however erudite, be thirled to a morose austerity?

Unlike most Frenchmen, M. Beljame wore a beard of enormous proportions, and was certainly a picturesque and pleasing sight as he sat aloft at his desk, scanning minutely some Shakespearean passage that he was about to put into his lucid and impeccable French. "To the rescue, gentlemen," he would say, fiercely gripping by the middle his big silky beard; "let us proceed warily; I see from here a reef, a difficulty. *Beshrew*: how are we to render that word, for it embodies an oath of a quite small and singularly tiny kind? The question before us is: how are we to get the exact French equivalent for *beshrew?* I am not a swearing man myself, and have a very poor and contemptible knowledge of the various grades and strata of profanity. Ignorant myself, I must call upon the adepts. I, therefore, in the interests of Shakespearean scholarship, request any gentleman in this class-room *who is in the habit of swearing, and can discriminate between values that differ*, to examine the treasures of his vocabulary and supply me with a little oath, neat and dainty, that will meet our present need." How could any audience be proof against such a touching effort at humour? The hearers broke out into peals of laughter, and when silence was restored, Beljame produced the right word himself. He had had it ready all the time.

Some years before his death, M. Beljame gave a course of lectures on French translations of Shakespeare, laying special stress on the curious adaptations of Ducis. The truth is that Shakespeare cannot be put into French verse with any approach to adequacy. The absence of blank verse is a fatal objection. Nor do the

sublimity, massiveness, colour, and romance of our Elizabethan dramatist remain, when his ideas are put into literal French prose. The very features that have made French the most magnificent vehicle of expression that ever existed, for the purposes of social intercourse, scientific exposition, diplomatic correspondence, and lucid interpretation, have contributed somewhat to lessen its capability for the vague and mysterious sublimities of poetry. Rivarol was right when he said, *what is not clear is not French.* "The metaphors of poets outside of France," he adds, "are always a degree higher than ours, and their poetry is more strongly coloured." . . . "Our poets find their imagination limited *par le génie circonspect de la langue.*"

Of nineteenth century British prose-writers, Scott and Dickens are the most highly prized in France.* Translations of their books are everywhere exposed for sale, in shop and stall. The broad Scotch of the one and the queer cockney of the other, do not lend themselves very well to reproduction in the polished periods of the French language, and the translators make the oddest of blunders sometimes. Yet the French "catch on" wonderfully well to the humour of Dickens, and his magnificent humanity attracts them precisely as it does

* Continental readers of English are fortunate in having such a fine collection of our authors available, in the cheap and convenient Tauchnitz editions. The most recent London novels may be purchased in Tauchnitz form at all the big bookstalls in France and Germany. Would that we had such a comprehensive and cheap set of French books in Britain! I fear Tauchnitz has caused many good men to fall into the sin of smuggling.

ourselves. His *Tale of Two Cities*, dealing with the period of the French Revolution, has, of course, a special interest for French readers, and has had a wide circulation. Quite recently the *Matin* published *Oliver Twist* in serial form. Dickens, who was never near a University, has, in France, become a subject of collegiate study. When I attended the Sorbonne, the students were reading *Bleak House*, and translating certain of the difficult passages into their own tongue. I venture to think that the exercise was as valuable a mental discipline as any they underwent in the Latin or Greek class-rooms. He is no dunce who can put into sufficient French the wonderful first chapter of *Bleak House*, with its description of the Court of Chancery sitting in the thickest of London fogs. The French are not, of course, insensible to the faults of Dickens's work, and have commented on these with some severity. They stand aghast at his morbidly eccentric types, such as Quilp and Fagin, and at his caricature, sentimentalism, want of measure, and declamatory eloquence. After pointing out all Dickens's faults, M. Jusserand can, nevertheless, say: "Surtout il a un idéal élevé. . . . Jamais on n'a plus puissamment recommandé et d'une manière qui se grave plus au fond des cœurs, la rectitude de vie, le désintérressement, l'indifférence aux mépris mondains, et signalé le prix de la paix de conscience et des bonnes actions ignorées." It is particularly instructive to hear the views of a foreign critic on our English writers: in such cases, one has a hint of what the voice of posterity will say.

The works of Sir Walter Scott are very largely

utilised also in the curricula of French educational establishments. Messrs. Hachette, the famous Paris bookselling firm, publish editions for college use of *Ivanhoe*, *Rob Roy*, *Quentin Durward*, *The Antiquary*, *Old Mortality*, and *Tales of a Grandfather*, with excellent annotations, from which even English students might learn something. It is long since France took Sir Walter to her heart. So far back as 1831, when the weary old veteran of romance was near the end of his days, the great French poet, Lamartine, wrote a most graceful tribute to the "Author of Waverley," in which occur several lines that very well indicate Scott's suitability for the purposes of education:

> "La main du tendre enfant, peut t'ouvrir au hasard,
> Sans qu'un mot corrupteur étonne son regard,
> Sans que de tes tableaux la suave décence
> Fasse rougir un front couronné d'innocence.
> Sur la table du soir, dans la veillée admis,
> La famille te compte au nombre des amis."

Scott's influence on French literature was great and far-reaching during the first half of last century. Hugo and the romantics were profoundly influenced by his mediævalism and his vivid historical imagination.

FRENCH WORKERS IN BRITISH LITERATURE.

The recent contributions of French scholars to British literature are of the greatest value, and ought to be better known in this country. Some half-dozen of our important poets have been thoroughly analysed, with insight and sympathy, by competent French critics:

Pope, Burns, Thomson, Crabbe, Wordsworth, Young, and some others. The books I know best are the *Pope*, of Professor Beljame, and the *Burns*, of Professor Angellier. Anyone who wishes to study the relationship of English men of letters to the English public in the eighteenth century, could not do better than procure M. Beljame's exhaustive work: it is a rich mine of information on all that pertains to the time of Anne and the early Georges. I have searched it over and over again for details regarding some of the many obscure writers mentioned in the *Dunciad*, and never failed to get satisfaction. Germany has given us nothing more detailed on the epoch in question. But, in addition to detail and accuracy, we have from M. Beljame that clear and pleasing prose style of which the French alone have the secret. M. Angellier's *Burns* has a special interest to those who come from the "land of the mountain and the flood." While engaged on his book, he came to Scotland and visited all the places of importance mentioned in the writings of the farmer poet. His description of Edinburgh is specially fine. He resolutely set himself to understand the splits, schisms, controversies, and refinements of Scotch theology; and in that task, which might well appal the boldest, he was as successful as any non-Caledonian can ever expect to be. There is a little of everything in M. Angellier's book: in his desire to do justice to the many-sidedness of Burns, he came near writing an encyclopædia. But his book is one to be thankful for. I would go a long way to hear him recite the *Address*

to a Haggis. From a Frenchman such a recitation would be unique.*

CLEAN GONE ON PROMETHEUS.

During one of the winters I spent in Paris, I attended several of the lecture-courses in the École des Hautes Études. One of these courses I remember with particular vividness, owing to the interesting style of the lecturer, M. Toutain. He took up as the subject or text of his discourses the myth of Prometheus, whom the poet Aeschylus represents as the benefactor of the human race, the filcher of fire from heaven, and the victim of Zeus's resentment. M. Toutain's remarks were not confined to the gorgeous Aeschylean play. He searched the folk-lore of all the Aryan peoples, from

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* M. Angellier, though a college professor, has not shrunk from translating even those passages of Burns that reflect most cruelly on book-learning, *e.g.*:

> "A set o' dull conceited hashes
> Confuse their brains in college-classes!
> They gang in stirks, and come out asses,
> Plain truth to speak;
> An' syne they think to climb Parnassus,
> By dint o' Greek,"

which is rendered (not quite satisfactorily) thus:

> "Une troupe d'imbéciles ternes et pédants
> Se brouillent la tête aux classes de collége;
> Ils y entrent veaux, ils en sortent ânes,
> A dire la vérité,
> Et puis ils pensent grimper le Parnasse,
> Au moyen du Grec."

India to Ireland, for variants of the story. The erudition and industry shown in M. Toutain's lectures were enormous. But there was, over and above all that, a captivating enthusiasm about the man that made the driest details live and glow. There was no attempt at declamation or formal eloquence. His delivery came in a torrent—he was so full of his subject—but it was perfectly clear for all that. Plenty of facts, well arranged and well set forth; plenty of light wit and illustrative humour too! I never could understand why M. Toutain had such a small number of auditors. Eight was a good turn-out, and sometimes we dwindled down to four. It must be admitted that three of these were most zealous men, and wrote copious notes. They would take nothing for granted, demanding chapter and verse for everything. If the lecturer referred, in a hasty way, to the views of some authority, they would at once interrupt by holding up the right hand, and request to be furnished with the precise section, sub-section, and page of the book referred to. M. Toutain took these interruptions in excellent part, and invariably gave full particulars. He rather liked to be brought to book. I have often wondered what on earth these men were taking notes for. Why had they such a living interest in the Promethean myth? All three of them were old, shabbily-attired, and not a bit like scholars. The great rush of Parisian life was sounding outside, and here were the dauntless three, oblivious of the present, and overwhelmingly interested in the myth of the heaven-scorning Titan, who was rivetted to the Caucasian crag and who shrieked curses under the beak of

the liver-rending vulture! It is only in Paris that you come across students of such sort. There is not a room in the Sorbonne in which you will not see mysterious, world-weary, old men and women, blinking tired eyelids over tired eyes, and essaying to fill their brains with lore before they die.

PENSIVE CITADELS.

There is not much money to be made in literature and study, but if even a living, with a *little over*, is made, how happy is the scholar in his pensive citadel (five storeys up, to be out of the noise), in his narrow street on the Left Bank! "The fulness of his bliss, I feel, I feel it all." In his famous little book, *Un Philosophe sous les Toits*, Emile Souvestre begins by saying: "I know a man who, amidst the fever of change and ambition which harasses the society of to-day, has continued to accept, without grumbling, his humble rôle in the world, and has kept, if I may say so, his relish for poverty. With no source of income save an unremunerative post, which enables him to live on the narrow confines separating comfort and want, this philosopher *looks down from the height of his attic upon society as upon a sea*, whose riches he desires not, and whose shipwrecks he does not fear. Occupying too little room to excite anyone's envy, he sleeps peacefully, wrapped in his obscurity." How can ennui ever come near such a man when he has a literary hobby? His studies have to do with the intellectual and the spiritual, two exhaustless reservoirs. He has no time to be miserable; he never wishes to stop work; he

would not thank you for a vacant holiday. Perhaps, after all, the foolishest men in the world are those who give themselves wholly up to the present engrossments of lucre, and take no thought of their old age. The shopkeeper may retire at the age of sixty-five, to the fireside and the easy chair, but if he has not taken care to train himself to some intellectual interest before his retiral, there are few men more to be pitied. Business being eliminated from his life, he has little to shorten the lagging hours save his pipe and the vaporous reminiscences of long ago. It is the merest worldly wisdom on the part of every one of us to seek some special interest of an intellectual kind early in life, and sternly and strictly give thereto a daily share of our time. Acting thus prudently, we shall live like civilised beings in our prime, and old age, if it ever does come, will not find us to seek. Science is a sovereign hobby, or history, or foreign languages, or poetry. Poetry is, perhaps, best of all. Every man, old or young, rich or poor, should seek diligently for poetical nourishment, and make a daily companion of the bard that suits him best. Creeds pass, rites change, etc., but poetry is a religion that remains as a charm against the poverty of materialism. It is the disinterested devotion to some spiritual or intellectual quest that makes man really rich. Hail, then, ye scholars of the Latin Quarter, in your regions mild of calm and serene air! You are laying up treasures that neither moth nor rust can corrupt. There are few men in Paris happier, and you have *a good view*, *too*, from your high perch, a fact that the above-mentioned Emile Silvestre,

who must have lived among you, has been careful to point out.

"He who lives only on first floors," says he, "can form no idea of the picturesque variety of the horizon, as seen from an attic. He has never beheld the numberless lines, at various angles, of the house-roofs and the quaint colours of the tiles; his eye has never followed the valleys formed by the rain conduits, where wave the fresh gardens of the attics. What great shadows are cast at evening over the slated roofs! How the windows sparkle in the flame of the setting sun! Those civilised Alps are covered with lichens and mosses of their own, and have a thousand inhabitants, from the microscopical insect to the domestic cat—that fox of the roofs—always on the prowl or the watch. The thousand varying moods of the misty or placid sky, and the thousand effects of light, make of our attic regions a theatre, with decorations that are ever changing."

There is some truth in the saying of Claretie: "Les mansardes sont les cerveaux d'une ville," *i.e.*, "The brains of a city are to be found in the topmost storeys."

A COLLISION OF WITS.

One of the most amusing events that can take place at the Sorbonne, is that called *maintaining a thesis*. It is a relic of mediævalism which proves that the scholastics of old dearly loved a bit of fun. Paris likes to witness such an Athenian combat, involving the sharp collision of wits and the resulting sparks of epigram. Consequently, the journals advertise a *soutenance de thèse* among the list of entertainments

for the day, and the affair is usually as well patronised as a theatre or concert. A student, let us suppose, is attracted by some epoch of literature, either in his own language or some other. He announces to the University that he will write a book on the subject. He forthwith erases from his mind "all forms and pressures else," and sets himself to investigate, summarise, codify, and criticise every item of a historical or literary nature that has any bearing, near or far, on the epoch in question. It may, and usually does, take him years to write his book. His desire is to make a permanent contribution to the literature of the subject. So sumptuous are his details and so widely does he cast his net for facts and influences, that his book, when finished and printed, may be regarded as a fairly sufficient History of the World during the given period. On this book he has to stand a public examination in one of the large halls of the Sorbonne. Attired in evening dress, and wearing white kid gloves, he sits at a small table by himself, under the gaze of a semi-circle of frowning professors. Each professor takes him in turn, and by the time the last has said his say, the poor book seems utterly torn to shreds: the style is alleged to be pompous and obscure, the facts dubious and ill-correlated, the aesthetic criticisms conventional, the deductions far-fetched and not worth the carriage, even the spelling careless and confused. These professors cannot, as a rule, be credited with what, in Holy Writ, is termed bowels of mercy. But when the candidate has his innings, he gives retaliatory smite for smite. He maintains that his style follows the best French traditions of

elegant clearness and chastened brevity. "As to the facts, they have all been verified, and the errors of previous writers eliminated. It is a pity that the professors, mighty men of valour as they are, have taken so little trouble to acquire even an elementary knowledge of the subject; *really their intellectual baggage seems negligible.*" The audience looks on with interest and follows the duel keenly. It is pleasing to note that the author will not give way on a single point. He knows his subject thoroughly, and does not spare the examiners when he catches them tripping. At the end of four or five hours, the combat ceases, and the author, after receiving congratulations, goes home for a Turkish bath.*

AN ABBÉ FROM THE PYRENEES WHO LOVED SCOTCH BROTH.

On one of the benches in the "philosophy" classroom of the Sorbonne (M. Boutroux was to be the speaker), I chanced, one day, to have for neighbour, a young abbé, with shaven crown and long, black cassock.

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* I heard of one candidate who, before his ordeal, had contrived to contract a ferocious cold and an appalling hoarseness. He began his reply by a fusillade of sneezes, and then, from croaking throat, uttered sounds that could not yield up their meaning to any ear. The professors sat craning their necks to no purpose. Shortly, one of them began to sneeze, and looked ashamed; then another and another, until it looked as if the candidate was infecting the whole board of them with the sneezing bacillus. The humour of the situation was too much for the auditors, who began to smile and applaud. The proceedings were brought to a close by a quotation from Horace.

He was of an affable disposition, and addressed me courteously in a few words of English. We had quite a pleasant conversation on trivial matters till the professor arrived. "Will you talk a turn with me in the Luxembourg garden after this is over?" he enquired, just as the lecturer was about to begin. "I'll see what I think during the lecture," I replied—an innocent remark, but one which caused the abbé to lose his gravity for a moment. It is impossible not to be drawn to a person who sees humour in your slightest observations; consequently the result of my cogitations during M. Boutroux's most interesting and, indeed, fascinating analysis of Herbert Spencer's philosophy, was entirely favourable to the abbé's proposal. We left the Sorbonne together, proceeded to the Garden, paraded its delightful alleys as far as that corner where the marble face of Sainte-Beuve looks at you from among the leaves, and there sat down for a quiet two-handed talk. I learned, among many other things, that his name was Loguz, and that he came from the extreme south of France, near the Pyrenees. His father, who had been an officer in the army, was dead; his mother, now old and frail, lived, well-cared for, in the house of a married son. It was the fond wish of this old mother, that one of her sons should be a priest. "And here I am in Paris, fulfilling my mother's wish," said the abbé cheerily, "and studying in the seminary and at the Catholic university, and at the Sorbonne too. But there is not much variety in the life; I feel lonely sometimes; I miss the peaks and the free air of the mountains; and, to tell the truth, not a day passes but

I long for a steaming bowl of thick vegetable soup such as you get among the peasants of the Pyrenees, and only there. Seminary soup has no substance. I could do with less Latin and more *légumes*." "You speak English very well," I said, "where did you learn it?" "Young as I am," said he "I have been to England. For a year. I was on the staff of a college near Durham. I had to speak French two hours a day with the older boys, and got board and some English lessons in return. The boys were fine manly fellows, and when I left (for I had to return to Paris for my theology), they presented me with a fountain pen and a safety razor." "Just one question," said I, "what are your views on Durham soup?" "It is an advance on the seminary variety," he rejoined, "but the nearest approach to the Pyrenaean ideal is to be found in the Scotch broth of the city of Edinburgh. I went there one Saturday from Durham, and was rewarded. I have always had a great admiration for Scotland since that day. My dinner consisted of four bowls of Scotch broth and it was quite enough. I am sorry the Scots are heretics. Such men ought to be in the bosom of the Church."

THE DREYFUS CASE IN THE SORBONNE.

The agitation caused in France by the Dreyfus case extended to the class-rooms of the University. As to the rights and wrongs of the great affair I have no competence to speak, though I have listened to innumerable discussions on the man and his trial. It is an opinion, meeting with general acceptance, that Dreyfus himself was an unimportant person. He be-

came notorious because he represented a principle, and because also his case was dragged into the heated arena of politics. It says much for France that the case ended as it did.

Several of the professors in the Sorbonne were known to be friendly to the accused officer, and others were notoriously hostile. As may well be believed, the students on the Left Bank threw themselves into the fray with all the impetuosity of youth, and took sides, for or against Dreyfus, in a very outspoken manner. They did not think it enough to hold clear views on the subject; they felt it necessary to shout, and demonstrate, and assail their opponents with offensive and provocative clamour. These demonstrations occasionally took place inside the class-rooms of the University, much to the detriment of study and the discomfort of the professors. A Dreyfusite student thus described to me the strategy to which he and his fellows resorted to foil the tactics of their opponents: "Every morning we held a council of war, and deputed scouts to attend the lectures of the professors who might be demonstrated against. A body of troops was kept within easy reach, and capable of being sent, in whole or part, to any room or rooms where a storm might be reported as raging. The room to which a scout was sent had no necessary connection with any literary subject in which he might be interested; his sole object was the observation and reporting of factional broils to the commanding general. If all was quiet in his room, the scout would curse his unlucky star, and bravely try to pass the time by paying a little attention to the lecture. But if war was in the

air, he would slip out hastily and say to his chief: 'Professor So-and-so is menaced; send a detachment of competent men to his lecture at once.' And, instantly, students *of correct views*, possessed of ability to bawl, and willing to sacrifice umbrellas and sticks, would hurry off to the seat of war. Those were the days when students could show their esteem for a much-loved master more strikingly than by the prosaic and conventional method of listening to what he had to say. I don't deny that we had slippery adversaries to deal with, and that sometimes they overreached us. It is sweet to look back on those merry times; they have left a dusty and tumultuous souvenir in our minds."

The conclusion of the Dreyfus case was an immense relief to the Republic. It was truly distressing to see how worthy men, like Coppée, lost their heads when they discussed the lamentable affair.

PRESIDENT KRUGER ON THE LEFT BANK.

When President Kruger saw he was losing ground in South Africa, and that our forces were slowly, but surely, marching to victory, he came to Europe and attempted to obtain help and countenance from some of the great military powers. The Parisians received him with loud acclamations, and rang the bells till they rocked the steeples. M. Guyot's paper, the *Siècle*, was almost the only journal that did not approve of the mission. I had occasion to call on a well-known French Protestant pastor on the day that Mr. Kruger was being fêted, and found the reverend gentleman sitting absent-mindedly at his desk writing VIVENT LES BOERS, with a

pen on a piece of blotting-paper. Later in the day, I saw Mr. Kruger himself, when he came over to the Latin Quarter to visit the students. It was a pleasant spectacle, which every Briton would have applauded. Several mounted cuirassiers, with gleaming helmets and long horse-hair manes, had been accorded by M. Loubet as a guard of honour. Following these were a couple of republican cyclists. Then in an open carriage was the respectable-looking old President himself, up to the neck in gorgeous bouquets of flowers. I have seen many faces like his among the farmers of Aberdeenshire and the Scotch Highlands. A tough and solemn old Calvinist he looked, as much out of place on the Boulevards as Ezekiel or Jeremiah would have been. The students and street-boys shouted enthusiastic greetings at him, but the old man smiled not, and preserved an utter impassibility. I heard no cries of hostility to Britain. During Mr. Kruger's visit, the conduct of the Parisian populace was perfect.

About this time, many of the French journalists were expressing a daily conviction that the British Empire would soon be no more, that the dust of ages was on us, that Nemesis was cutting the cord which bound in one our scattered possessions, and doing many other things unpleasant to contemplate. A clever afternoon paper, *La Patrie*, edited by a trenchant and imaginative writer called M. Lucien Millevoye, was particularly sore upon us, and scarcely a day passed, even when the wires were not working, that he did not make the Boers rout us with dreadful slaughter. An English correspondent, who added up the various figures, found that our

losses in two years amounted to 1,315,902 men. Such carnage was very shocking to a patriot.

BOHEMIA.

The Bohemian life of the Latin Quarter has been portrayed by the graceful pen of Murger, in some most striking sketches and stories. His pages make painful reading. It is neither possible nor desirable to portray Bohemia as anything but the suburb of hell. It is the abode of uproarious sin and squalid vice, and he who makes even a temporary stay in its noisy purlieus, runs the gravest risks of moral and physical deterioration. The Puritan has often been laughed at, but he can afford to be the object of ridicule since it is always he who laughs last. "That man hath perfect blessedness who walketh not astray." But, for the dweller in the Latin Quarter, as for the dweller anywhere else, there is no necessary connection between jollity and dissipation. If Murger's books prove anything, they prove that good, hearty fun and rollicking spirits, are not the portion of the prodigal. His own last words were the emphatic repudiation of the irregular life he had essayed to idealise. "*Surtout*," he said, "*pas de Bohème.*" When I think of the many thousands of earnest, well-meaning, right-living young fellows, who live the strenuous student's life in the streets and lanes all round the Boulevard Saint-Michel, I am disposed to consider that the population of Bohemia is not a very large one. There is a more elegant, but equally depressing, kind of Bohemia on the Right Bank of the city, which one may find described and reprobated

in certain novels of Ernest Daudet. The wealthy voluptuaries introduced in such stories as *Le Comte Pogoutzine* (to mention but one), are represented as spending the whole of their worthless lives in the pursuit of pleasure. Art is ill employed when chronicling the monotonous and uninteresting rascaldom of brainless libertines; nevertheless I am thankful that Daudet *shoots* one or two of the worst in the process of his narrative. It would not have been much more expensive to roast a few of them before a slow fire.

THE DOYEN OF THE JOURNALISTS.

It is my usual practice, when in Paris, to purchase a franc's worth of papers at a news-kiosk early in the morning, and browse over these for an hour or two, comparing different records of the same events, and reading the vivacious editorial comments on the topics of the hour. The leading articles being, as a rule, *signed*, one comes to know the characteristics of the chief contributors. There is one notorious writer who does not need to sign his articles, for his style is unmistakable. I refer to M. Henri Rochefort, a journalist who has helped to make history, and who, in his eightieth year, is still writing his daily leader. "What do you think of M. Rochefort?" I once asked of a cultured young Frenchman, in the course of a conversation on modern journalism. The reply was: "He is an old man; we admire him for his invincible spirit; he has always been a hard fighter (*un rude jouteur*); and he is still *très très fort*." To get the full significance of the phrase *très très fort*, the reader must be able to

pronounce the letter *r* in the Parisian guttural way. The calm atmosphere of to-day does not suit M. Rochefort's venomous and heated style. But in the seventies and eighties, when Paris was full of excitement, his mordant pen was a terror. Some of his articles on the third Napoleon and on the early Republican leaders, have all the bitterness and force of Cicero on Catiline or Clodius. There is nothing in British journalism that can be compared with M. Rochefort's unfair and rasping invective. To-day, M. Rochefort, though not by any means an extinct volcano, is not nearly so furious as he was. I have observed in many of his recent articles a quieter tone, and a tendency to babble pleasantly of "auld lang syne." The very last article of his I read contained the following two reminiscences. "When I was at college, in the year 1848, we were one day annoyed in our class-room by the noise of musketry in the street outside. Our lecturer told us to pay no heed, as the noise was caused by some urchins throwing stones at the window-panes. The fact is *a revolution was in progress.* That same day, two hours later, Louis Philippe was no longer king, and was being hurriedly driven away in a cab from the capital." . . . "Shortly after the commencement of the war of 1870, word came to Paris that a great victory had been gained over the Germans, and that the regiment of white cuirassiers, to which Bismarck belonged, had been annihilated. There was great rejoicing, and all Paris was soon fluttering with flags. A second despatch came later in the day, announcing that the victory was on the side of the

Germans. Joy gave place to sorrow, and the flags were at once pulled inside."

M. Rochefort's stirring career has not taught him to regard tranquillity as a boon. He loves the combat, and his chief weapon is denunciation.

ARTISTIC REPORTING.

Another writer of the gladiatorial school is M. Drumont of the *Libre Parole*. Outside of journalism he has written many delightful works which every lover of literature can unreservedly admire. M. Drumont is a tireless assailant of the Children of Israel who, in his view, are acquiring far too much financial and political power in the country. It is a good thing that hard words break no bones, for, if they did, the Hebrew financiers of Paris would be in a sorry state. I regret that Great Britain fares ill at M. Drumont's hands, and that he does not admire the Member of Parliament for West Birmingham. The following extract from one of M. Drumont's leading articles is a few years old, but none the less funny for that. It is entitled

The Duke of Algeria.

"Britain has stolen Egypt, and is now busy assimilating and digesting it. She is also casting a covetous eye on Algeria, and will, beyond a doubt, avail herself of the inevitable struggle which is bound, sooner or later, to break out in Europe, to lay a forcible hand on the French colony of Algeria. *Chamberlain will then be able to realise his dream of becoming Duke of Algeria*, a title which he not long ago jokingly coined for himself.

For many a year Britain has been paving the way for this new conquest by despatching thither innumerable troops of Protestant missionaries, of both sexes, to distribute money and gunpowder among the native Arabs, taking care, at the same time, to instil hatred and disesteem for France. These facts are perfectly well known to all who take an interest in Algerian politics, although, unfortunately, the great mass of the French nation regard them as unreasonable and imaginary."

Stupid articles like the foregoing are now rarely seen in the boulevard prints. The far-seeing and pacific diplomacy of King Edward VII., and the practical sympathy of Great Britain during the terrible inundations of 1910, have had the effect of shaming into silence the mischief-mongers on both sides of the English Channel.

Let the English reader compare the following reports :—

"Last night, between eight and nine o'clock, a man was seen to hurry, with long strides, across the Bridge of Austerlitz. He was excited, and kept muttering a rigmarole of incoherent words. Foreseeing a tragedy, the passers-by kept an eye on him. All of a sudden the strange individual stopped, leaned on the parapet, looked fixedly at the water which seemed to fascinate him, took a leap and sprang into the Seine, after having thrown a long white paper down on the pavement. Some swimmers, who had seen him fall, plunged at once into the river. Boats were unmoored from the shore, and the rowers searched all round the bridge most carefully. All their efforts were put forth in vain, for the

hapless man had gone right down to the bottom. On the paper the following words were written in pencil:—'Being ill and out of work, and having neither relatives nor friends, I prefer to make an end. Georges Bergès, aged 49, a native of Paris.' Search parties explored the river the whole night long, but without result."

"A man named Bergès, committed suicide last night by leaping into the Seine from the Austerlitz Bridge."

These reports are taken from two journals, both published in Paris—the first is intended for French readers, the second for English. The latter account is laconic and makes no pretensions to art or vividness; the former makes an attempt to reproduce the scene, is full of graphic touches, and powerfully arrests the attention. The French journalist must still be garnishing his news with *style;* he must be animated and readable at any cost. He is sometimes blamed, indeed, for making a little truth go a long way, and for calling upon his imagination to supplement the meagreness of his *data.*

HUMOURS OF THE ADVERTISEMENT COLUMN.

The advertisements in the French newspapers are often drawn up in very diverting language. One quack has been advertising, for the last ten years at least, a cure for hernia and other intestinal affections. He affirms, day after day, that his object is purely a humanitarian one, and that he brings his *nostrum* before the public solely as the *result of a vow*, which he made before high Heaven, when his own cure was effected. The way in which he combines devotion and

business is very astute and touching. After King Edward's visit to Paris in 1909, a vendor of perfumes informed the public that "His Britannic Majesty, before leaving the banks of the Seine, did not fail to send a special courier to purchase samples of our perfumes, in order that when at home, in the palace of his august ancestors at Windsor, he might have something within easy reach, that would fragrantly remind him of this beautiful Paris which he loves so dearly, and in which he has passed so many joyful hours. Long live his royal house and ours! Long live the cordial understanding!" There is a bright little morning paper, *Le Journal*, which once a week gives up a page to advertisements of a matrimonial and amatory nature. The wording of these notices is usually artistic and always entertaining: "A young lady, of distinguished manners, who speaks several European languages, but whose heart is withered with grief, is desirous of consolation and balm. Would exchange photographs with a young gentleman of medium height, cheery and curly-haired (chestnut preferred). This is *extrêmement sérieux*." Modesty is not an outstanding feature of these notices, as the following typical extract proves: "A gentleman, *like whom there are few*, desires to meet a lady, *like whom there is none*." No doubt the gentleman was a humorist, for his phrases have a double edge. It would be interesting to know how many ladies thought they fulfilled his conditions. I am certain that the person who wrote the following would appeal to a wide constituency: "A gentleman 'of a certain age,' with abundance of means and interested in psychology,

would like to meet a high-tempered, excitable, and misunderstood young lady." One can only hope that he is still alive and preserving his interest in mental science. I do not feel much respect for the young man who can blow his own trumpet thus: "A young man, poor, but dowered with a poetic soul, desires to leave commerce, in which he finds nothing but disillusions, and devote himself, in company with some amiable and inspiring charmer, to the worship of the Nine. What offers? Ladies with a past not ineligible. Dark eyes and hair, and a little means preferred." In Britain, such a soulful youth would probably get a pair of black eyes from somebody. The foregoing *annonces*, extracted from a recent number of *Le Journal*, are not without a sociological value. Our British advertisements are much less florid and poetical.

BAD BOYS.

One reads constantly in the French papers exaggerated accounts of the crime and depravity of the rising generation. Various reasons are put forward to account for the alleged criminality, the commonest being the absence of religious instruction in schools. It is said that many of the hooligans (apaches), who infest the outer boulevards, come of decent parentage, and might themselves have continued respectable if their education had been conducted on religious lines. Nothing, it is said, can check youthful vice except systematic instruction in the principles of the Catholic Faith. My acquaintance with France and the French (very inadequate, no doubt), disposes me to distrust the allegations

of those who assert that crime, youthful or middle-aged, is on the increase. France is much as it has always been, from the point of view of morality; the country is, if anything, better behaved than under the Second Empire, when the Church had more sway and influence than now. As to the special efficacy of the Catholic Faith, I say nothing, except that I had the privilege of being brought up in a Protestant country, where the people found that the Shorter Catechism furnished motives of a very direct, efficacious, and peremptory kind, for keeping within the paths of virtue. Protestantism and Catholicism are both productive of good citizens; both would welcome Christianity in the schools; let them agree upon something in common, however little, that would be salutary and Christian. Till the two great bodies agree, the State seems justified in making instruction secular. Such a course imposes, no doubt, a responsibility on parents and clergy, to see that young children get religious teaching outside of school. Yet, it would be far more creditable to our common Christianity, if some religious teaching could be agreed upon by all. Since, however, the divided Church cannot find any general grounds, satisfactory to all parties, for inculcating in the young the Fear of God, the State must e'en enforce a common morality, based on the far inferior sanctions of Fear of Man and of the strong arm of the Law.

A WEEK'S CAUSERIES.

The daily *causerie*, which forms such a pleasant feature in most French journals, gives great scope for

exhibiting the national qualities of light wit, mocking persiflage, and genuine critical insight. No writer surpassed the late M. Harduin of the *Matin* in that style of composition. His contributions were short, but every sentence went to the mark. People were so used laughing at his merry quips that when he took up a subject of political economy (and he was well versed in that science), they did not always feel grateful enough for the genuine instruction. Yet, no matter what subject he handled, he had the gift of making it interesting. His mind seized instinctively on the humorous side of things, and he could make people laugh at anything. Harduin, and those like him, deserve to be called public benefactors: it is no small service to the world to give five minutes' innocent and artistic amusement every day in the year to half a million people.

For many years I have been a close student of the French newspapers, and believe that a few extracts, chosen from a variety of sources during the last decade, would be both amusing and instructive. Let the reader brace himself then for a week's tattle. I have felt it my duty to *edit* these causeries somewhat, and, having done so, do not feel justified in blaming them on the original writers.

MONDAY: ILLUMINATION ON THE SUBLIMINAL SELF.

Imagine, if you please, a large house of five storeys and an attic, inhabited by two genii, one a feeble, fickle, indifferently-wise fellow, and the other the perfection of all goodness, having, for convenience of reference, the

initials C. S. and S. S. respectively. The latter is confined to the attic, and his time, as a rule, is taken up in the contemplation of the sky and in pondering over the abstract essence of things. C. S., on the other hand, has the run of the whole five storeys, and, to his credit be it said, he manages to keep them in fairly good order. But every now and again C. S. turns eccentric, and goes about smashing windows and doors, upsetting furniture, disarranging pictures, and turning order into the most frightful chaos. This exhausts him at last and he falls down, bruised and useless, into a profound slumber. At this juncture, S. S., who has been listening to the din, slips down from his Olympian Attic and quietly puts everything back in its place with the speed and efficiency of a practised magician. His stay is long or short according to the amount of the damage. When the repairs are all executed, he performs a few mystic passes over the muttering dreamer, and noiselessly retires to his tower above. Soon after he has gone, C. S. wakens out of his unconsciousness, feeling fresh and vigorous. He behaves well for a time, until he loses tone again and produces a new uproar. My parable is simple, and even the wayfaring man, unless he is fool enough to push the story too hard, need not err therein. The house with the five storeys is the mind of man, and the two genii are the Conscious Self and the Subconscious Self, C. S. and S. S. respectively. The latter is never very far away, and he is the medium by which we come into touch with God and Health. When our Conscious Self has wrought havoc with the fair domain of the soul, order is restored and strength be-

stowed by the direct interposition of the other. It is thus, *not* sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care (qui ravaude la manche effilée du souci!) S. S. is the real *sartor*; only, the bungler, C. S., must be asleep before the knitting begins.

TUESDAY: A LOGICAL DREAM.

I dreamt last night that I was sitting on a natural stone chair in a craggy crevice of a rough beach, watching the immense rollers that came majestically in from an outer Sound, and deteriorated into a tumult of waters among the irregular boulders at my feet. I became aware, as I sat thus, of the swift vertical drop of something into the water. A big, broad-pinioned gannet, that had been poising lazily aloft for some minutes, had suddenly dropped himself like a plummet of lead into the water—no plummet ever sank swifter or straighter than he did. In two minutes he was out, and the end of a wriggling fish could be seen protruding for a second from his beak. He began his poise and watch once more, little knowing that he had caught his last fish. A sharp report, easily located by a ring of mist, came from a small boat in the open, and down came the winged victim, shattered and gory, to the surface of the water. The fish was avenged ere its spasms were well over. In my dream, I saw the occupants of the boat swiftly rowing to the spot, where the dead bird lay outspread on the water; but, on arriving there, the sportsman of the company (who was a burly man), through excessive eagerness or miscalculation, leaned out too far, and, a billow aiding, caused the

boat to be upset. I saw them for a little, *rari nantes in gurgite vasto*, but I did nothing to save them and they were all drowned. I awoke, and it was high time; the devastation had been too systematic and appalling to give me much pleasure. Perhaps if Æsop had had a like experience, he might have made a fable and a moral out of it. Dr. Pangloss, on the other hand, would probably have used it to illustrate the doctrine of design in nature: Sea-birds have sharp eyes to enable them to see their prey in the water; sportsmen have fire-arms to enable them to shoot the fowls of the air; the billows of the sea have been specially invented for the havoc of man. Therefore, fish are eaten by gannets; gannets are shot by fire-arms; and men are overwhelmed in billows. In no case is design frustrated or cause deprived of its effect.

WEDNESDAY: REFLECTIONS ON THE LEAF OF A TREE.

Never be afraid, my dear philosopher, that you are doing a trivial or undignified thing in studying human nature in its humblest aspects. Strictly speaking, there are no humble aspects; everything is worthy of study and close attention.

A tiny leaf picked up from the highway, and magnified to the size of a square mile, would furnish, under its new conditions, some most extraordinary subjects of contemplation. The small veins that are barely visible to the naked eye, would become great, broad highways of green. The little holes in the leaf, that some vagrant insect has punctured, would look like great, terrific chasms. Graceful and magnificent forests would sprout

up in many a hill and dell. And what animals we should see! Imagine those little insects, like moving pin-points of green, magnified to the size of elephants, and moving along the leaf that we have supposed to be enlarged to the size of a prairie. Out of the depths of what is normally bare surface to the human vision, would arise life upon life, parasite upon parasite, beauty upon beauty, deformity upon deformity. We are unable to conceive an end to the revelations which would be disclosed by infinitely extending any inch of the earth's surface. Of one thing we may be certain, that the architecture of nature is as wonderful and sublime and varied in the unseen complexities of a speck of dust, as in the gigantic mountain range that runs through an empire's length. It is not without profound meaning that pantheists have declared that the whole secret of the universe, of God and man, was shut up in a flower in the crannied wall.

As a further exercise in imagination, and let me say also, in humility, you might contrariwise suppose Paris and its immensities, contracted (with all due proportions observed), into the space of six square inches. Life upon life, parasite upon parasite, beauty upon beauty, deformity upon deformity—all huddled into that tiny compass and set down upon the leaf of an oak-tree. Calculate, then, if you please, the height of the Towers of Notre Dame, the frontage of the Sorbonne, and the length of the Rue de Rivoli. The figures, in any case, would be larger than calculations made in the light of eternity.

THURSDAY: NOCTURNAL TERRORS.

The phenomenon of dreaming has long been a puzzle to all thinkers in their waking hours, and some of these eminent men have been known to express a belief that men's dreams have frequently an atavistic tinge, and are due to incidents that happened in the simian or monkey stage of the evolutionary process. Thus (it is said) the terrible fall, or "drop into the abyss," that we all too vividly experience in our sleep, and which rudely wakens us, in panic and perspiration, is a reminiscence of that far-past time when rudimentary man, still possessed of a tail, would run the risk of many a fall from the branches in his forest home. Personally, I was, up till the age of thirty-five, continually tormented at night by dreams of a pursuing devil. I ran from his hot pursuit, and always awoke in palpitating horror just as he was clutching me. My life, I hope, has been virtuous enough; I never have brooded on any Satanic projects in my waking moments: I have, therefore, been forced to the conclusion that my midnight tormentor must have been a *hereditary relic*. Usually our races were performed on dry land, but not always. At times I took a flight through the air, over chimneys and steeples and moss-grown, owl-haunted towers, but he, with long tail, horns, and fiery eyes, was never very far in the rear. Sometimes our course was over the star-lit sea, and then I had night-mare indeed. The devil ceased to torment me after I turned thirty-five. Since that time, one of my favourite night annoyances is connected with law and lawyers. I dream that the postman

brings me letters which threaten me with the most awkward disclosures in a court of justice. A malignant huzzy, mother of a large family, desires to saddle me with the sustenance of her miscellaneous brood, and calls upon me, through the agency of an unscrupulous petti-fogger, to pay the most exorbitant sums, as aliment and hush-money. In my dreams, I am but too painfully conscious that their claims are valid, and that I am hopelessly compromised. It is only when my eyes are open that I become aware of my unblemished purity. The sleeping sinner transforms himself into a waking saint.

FRIDAY: ON NEMESIS.

This life is, indeed, a comedy, and he who jogs on complacently, doing the duty that is nearest him, hoping for the best, and stopping now and again to indulge in a hearty laugh at things, is not the silliest of men. Looking round among my acquaintances, I notice a great number who would be happier if they were humbler and less ambitious. The unfortunate thing is, that men are so often ambitious for what they would be better without. Everyone knows that George Vautel died owing to his getting a red ribbon. For years he had been working the works of benevolence and giving big subscriptions to political funds, in order to call attention to the nobility of his soul and his fitness for decoration. He was successful at last, but his success took him to the tomb. Congratulations shoaled in on him, and each had to be answered; banquets were given in his honour, and these had to be eaten and drunk; deputations came with addresses, and he had to

make addresses in return. The excitement was too much for him, and he was laid low with a fatal attack of *tabes dorsalis*, a disease which (I will not conceal the fact) is practically identical with *posterior spinal sclerosis*. But for his perverse hankering after a senseless bauble, society would have retained his services for many a year. We have all to pay dearly for the honours that come our way. My own history supplies me with ample proofs of the switch-back nature of human destiny. The very day I was made *officier d'académie*, I lost ten guineas by turf indiscretions. *Talking of horses*, I am reminded of an appropriate anecdote of Lafayette, which illustrates, as well as Franklin's whistle, the great principle of Nemesis on which I have been laying stress. When that great general (Lafayette, I mean) came back to Paris from America, he got a glorious reception from his grateful and admiring fellow-countrymen. His passage along the streets was a triumphal procession, and tears of joy bedewed the cheeks of the spectators. At last the enthusiastic mob took the general's horses out of his carriage, and dragged him, amid thunders of applause, to the doors of his own house. It pains me to relate that *the general never saw those horses again*. In such fashion was Lafayette penalised for his popularity. When good luck befalls a man, he should forestall fate by some signal act of penance and humility.

SATURDAY: CANOPHILES AND CANOPHOBES.

My rambles in the country would be more extensive and sustained, if I were not mortally afraid of the dog

species. I am tolerant of dogs that belong to my friends, and have, so to speak, a certificate of character. But even with such animals I prefer not to be left alone. *They see through me too easily*, and are perfectly aware that I can be scared by a show of their white teeth, a growl, or an intrusive attempt at pawing familiarity. I cannot understand why it is that men, smaller in stature and (as I am fain to believe), less formidable in appearance than I am, can domineer dogs by a mere word or glance. On one occasion, being hauled to a dog show in England by my friend Barker, I was astonished to see how easily he could render the surliest curs tractable and friendly. He knew how to speak to them in their own language. They at once recognised him as their master, while each and all of them strained their chains to get a snap at my calves. I saw Barker approach a formidable bull-dog, seize the animal by the jaws, forcibly open its mouth, and gaze therein intently for a lengthy space of time. The animal yielded quite peacefully to an inspection that would have cost me several fingers. It is evident that some men are born with an instinctive knowledge of canine psychology.

The other day, in a village lane embowered with trees and traversed by a bridge-spanned brook, I saw, some yards in front of me, a wild and ragged dog that looked both able and willing to fly at my legs. Its master was leaning over the bridge contemplating the motion of the water, and probably seeing nothing but the mirrored illusions of his own vagrant fancy. The brute emitted a yelp as if to draw the master's atten-

tion to me, and request the word of permission that would authorise a spring in my direction. The master turned round hastily, grasped the situation, and damped the dog's ardour by a strong word. The dog, surprised and discomfited, retreated out of my way. All mankind, it seems to me, may be divided into two classes—*canophiles* and *canophobes*. I belong to the latter class, and that dog on the bridge knew me at once by some subtle instinct of classification. Sir Walter Scott, *on the other hand*, was a pronounced canophile. Dogs knew when he was on the premises, and *drifted*, *in spite of themselves*, into his vicinity, in order to pay him their homage. I hope no one will generalise to my disadvantage, and say that my dislike of dogs and their dislike of me, are circumstances that indicate some radical defect in my moral nature.

SUNDAY: WHATEVER IS, IS RIGHT.

When I was a young man, and didn't get what I earnestly prayed for, I would begin to doubt the existence of a Great First Cause. It was a foolish thing on my part, but then, I was young, and didn't see far in front of me. I also thought God had nothing better to do than attend to my selfish petitions, as if the Universe and the Planets and the Milky Way and the Great Bear, were mere trifles in comparison with me. It's a blessing the Almighty did not take me at my word sometimes, for what I wanted would have been to my hurt, I can see now. When I look back on my life and consider all the things I wished so much and failed to get, I see what a lucky man I have been. I repeat

that my greatest apparent failures were the most fortunate things that could have happened to me. Arguing from my humble, limited, and individual experiences, I can see, distantly and dimly, the reasonableness of the belief that *everything* will come right through time. We are children, and, as the proverb says, "Children should not see a half-finished job." The devastations of the sea, the carnage of the battlefield, the eruptions of the earth's crust, the gnawing miseries of the mind, the ravages of drink: are these right? I could not even venture to suggest an explanation of them without supposing a hereafter or, rather, a whole host of hereafters. Never forget that God has plenty of time to do anything He wants to do, and that if He kills a regiment of men, or lets them be killed, by a shell, He can send their souls into new bodies the very next minute. *I believe we've all been on the earth before, and that we'll all be back again.* When I hear of a man being shot, I say to myself, "It's not nice to get a box on the ear and it's not nice to be shot; both are bad, and, when they are over, the second is not much worse than the first." Another thing that might help us to look upon the miseries of the world less despondently, is the undoubted fact that we are apt to take them in the bulk and so magnify them fearfully. It's no worse for me when one man dies than when a thousand die. Each man has the pain of the dying, but he does not feel the pain of the whole thousand. The world is made up of individuals, and nobody has a right to dogmatise about the pleasures and pains of anybody but himself. It is right to cultivate sym-

pathy, but wrong to waste it. Don't say that there is bad in the world, say there is bad in yourself; also, ponder whether the bad has not an amount of good that may work in it and leaven it to some beneficent end.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE GARDEN OF FRANCE.

On the way to Tours: a fellow-passenger's story—In the town of Tours: famous natives—The French of Touraine—Peasant proprietors—A well-informed old Frenchman—A profound scholar—A lover of the subjunctive mood—The Latin genius—The spleen—Two Caledonian tales—A Saint's-day fête—A *courtier en retraite*—A jovial Swede—A very systematic American—The Americans in France.

On the right bank of the Loire—The Alliance Française—La Fontaine—Afternoon tea in the garden—A droll anecdote—Regarding monks—The secular spirit—Lourdes and its cures—A grand old gardener—In the suburbs—A trenchant critic of French cooking—On tips and tipping.

A French teacher of English—Glimpses of family life—A parable—M. Chevrier denounces the Bedouin spirit—French marriages.

French schools—Disciplinary methods—A story from Claretie—Comparisons.

ON THE WAY TO TOURS: A FELLOW-PASSENGER'S STORY.

The train-journey between Paris and Tours occupies about four hours, and is a perpetual delight to the traveller who loves fair prospects and the scenery of cultivated lands. Nature has been bounteous, but man has done his duty too. It has taken the sweat of many a generation of toilers to bring those fields to such a perfection of culture.

The first time I travelled from the French capital into the province of Touraine, was in the summer of 1900, and on that occasion I was fortunate in having as fellow-passenger, a well-informed and amusing schoolmaster from Glasgow. Our talk ran mainly on the Franco-German War, which he was old enough to remember well, and which he had evidently studied in all its details, for he could name the various towns in Touraine that the Germans had occupied. His conversation, by reason of its variety and humour, greatly abbreviated the journey between Paris and Tours, and I think it right to give one of the most striking items.

"During the Franco-German War of 1870-71, the wages of the British miners were very high. Our coal was very much in demand abroad, for the workers, who should have been excavating the Continental mines, were clad in uniform, and patriotically shedding their blood on the field of battle. Scotch miners were never so highly paid as then, and very few of them kept their heads. Such squandering and feasting in the colliery villages! There were few houses without pianos and jewellery. Little did Bismarck think that his garbled telegram would so greatly stimulate the trade in cheap pianos, rings, watches, and chains. But political economy is full of such mercantile surprises. A Chancellor loses his temper in Potsdam, and lo! in a week or two, the miners in Lesmahagow are working double time.

"A few miners, shrewd fellows, who looked into the future and knew that good times would not always last, slaved and saved, and made small fortunes. A father

with two or three sons, provided they were sober and strenuous, could easily, at that time, put past hundreds of pounds yearly. It is creditable that certain young fellows from the mining villages, employed the money in educating themselves. Some actually went to college and became ministers. There are not a few clergymen in the West of Scotland whose college fees were paid out of the hoards amassed at the time of the Franco-German struggle.

"I have always thought it a fine thing that a young fellow of brains can, in our country, get out of an unintellectual calling into one that is higher. It is rare, however, that his physical aspect does not bewray his origin. If a man's ancestors for centuries have earned their living by howking the black mineral, he cannot expect, by means of a little Latin and less Greek, to wipe out the effects of all that subterranean atavism. I listened some Sundays ago to a very interesting discourse in a Glasgow church, on the well-worn subject of Shadrach, Meschach, and Abednego in the Fiery Furnace, as described by Daniel in the third chapter of his admirable prophecies. From the very beginning of the service, the idea of coal took hold of me. The minister was a little, short, dumpy, dusky man, who, in reading the hymn and uttering the prayer, was incessantly troubled with a huskiness, as if there was coal-dust in his throat. His text, dealing with the Fiery Furnace, gave an additional stimulus to my carbonic illusions. Before the sermon was over, it was not a minister but a miner I was listening to. Fancy clothed the preacher in the garb of the pit, and the

pulpit became a 'cage,' which I expected to see disappearing below into the bowels of the earth. I discovered subsequently that he had actually been a miner for some years, but by innate ability had managed to rise to the surface."

IN THE TOWN OF TOURS: FAMOUS NATIVES.

Balzac, in one of his short tales, gives a rather indifferent character to the natives of this beautiful town. He says that their fine climate has made them rather dreamy and indolent. He also alleges that they are somewhat hard to touch by the charms of literature: *une des villes les moins littéraires de France* are his words. Balzac's judgment is less applicable to this generation than to his. I do not think, however, that the townsfolk display nearly so much general interest in books as the inhabitants of a town of similar size in England or Scotland are wont to do. There is a mild and good-natured content in the face of the typical native, which shows that he does not fret overmuch about the printed thoughts of other people. His sky is blue, his sun is warm, his wine is delicious: why should he worry over the problems of existence?

Balzac himself was a native of Tours and (in striking contrast to the character he ascribes to his townsfolk), one of the hardest workers that ever lived, a perfect giant of toil. It is difficult to speak temperately, either of the merits or the faults of this extraordinary and eccentric genius. Like Scott and Shakespeare, he belongs to the literature of the world by his immensity,

his tirelessness, and his insight into life. He is commemorated, by statue, in the town of his birth. There are Balzacs still in Tours, one of whom bears a striking external resemblance to the novelist.

Every visitor to Tours should read Balzac's wonderful little story *Le Curé de Tours*, which is a powerful masterpiece. It is often the subject of conversation at dinner-tables, and natives of the town, who are interested in literature, can point out all the houses and streets to which Balzac refers. They will also tell you a host of stories about the novelist himself, his improvidence, his coffee-drinking, his midnight rambles in Paris, his friendship with George Sand, and many other items of droll gossip.

In Tours there are two other statues which every lover of learning is glad to contemplate, those of Descartes and Rabelais. A criticism, not unjust, of these two men is, that the first had *madness* in his *method*, and the second had *method* in his *madness*. Those who have been introduced to the philosophy of the first-named, through Prof. Veitch's English version of the *Discourse on Method*, will, perhaps, not be very reluctant to assent to the first part of the epigram. The second part, touching on Rabelais, is even less open to question.

It is not easy to exhaust the attractions of Tours and its environs. The great and sparkling flood of the Loire, bordered by exquisite promenades, is a sight that never palls. On a summer day, the peopled hill that dominates the right bank, gleams in colours that are strong enough for the tropics. At no great distance from the river is the superb Gothic Cathedral, with its

two far-seen towers (four hundred years was this temple a-building) and its spiritual memories of St. Martin and Gregory the Historical. Not far from the Cathedral, with its suggestions of the Prince of Peace, are the huddled and ugly barracks of the IXth Army Corps. Tours is thus a town of cassocks and uniforms. Early in the morning the visitor is wakened by bugle-notes and the measured tread of battalions. There are plenty of people still living in the town who remember that terrible winter of 1870-71, when the hateful squadrons of the Prussians were to be seen everywhere in the streets. It was in Tours that Gambetta (after escaping in a balloon from beleaguered Paris) established the Committee of National Defence which, later on, had to be removed further south to Bordeaux. It will take many a year before the French forget that winter of their discontent. The young people of Tours, whose fathers have told them stories of the war, carry in their hearts an undying grudge to the Germans.

THE FRENCH OF TOURAINE.

The French which is spoken by the natives of Touraine, is a pleasure to hear, so melodious and clear-sounding it is. I speak not merely of the townsfolk, but the peasantry also. Get into conversation with any of the farm-folk and you will be charmed with their full deliberate speech and admirable idiom. Their speech is good book French, in sum, with no alloy of slang or provincialism. One peculiarity, and only one, *did* strike me: the use of *tirer* instead of *traire*, for

our verb "to milk cattle." This high reputation of Touraine, as the home of the best French, is of long standing, and dates, no doubt, from the bright time of the old French Monarchy, when the châteaux were full of life, splendour, and joy, and the whole province redundant with fair dames and polished courtiers. When Joseph Addison was sent by the Whigs to learn French, for purposes of State, it was in Blois that he took up his abode. Pope's employment of "the lad of Blois," in one of his renderings of Horace, is well known. It might be difficult to say where *the best English* is spoken; no such difficulty exists for French. Every Frenchman will send you to the banks of the Loire for the purest articulation of his native tongue.

The English reader ought not to take his notions of the French peasant from the unpleasing portrayals of the Zolaesque novelists. These highly-gifted writers have done vast injustice to the labouring millions of France. Genius is ever prone to fasten upon the abnormal and exceptional, and represent these in such a way as to delude the unwary reader into supposing they are the normal and habitual. There are ferocious and unruly characters among the peasantry of France, it is true, but they are not representative of their class, and are handled by the French novelist far more than their importance warrants. I recognise Zola's great gifts, but am perfectly sure he misused them. I am glad he did not get into the Academy. He probably deserved, but not for literary reasons, to lie in the Panthéon. Let the English reader, who wishes a modest page, take Matthew Arnold's advice, and read, for insight into

peasant life, the admirable rural sketches of George Sand.*

Perhaps the very best way to prove to a doubter that the core of the great French nation is thoroughly healthy and sound, is to pull him out of bed at five in the morning, and force him off to the early market of Tours. Such a fine collection of industrious country people! What splendid physique, what health, jollity, and ruddy-brown faces! What a glorious exhibition of appetising country produce, vegetables and fruit, is ranged on the stalls, and dispensed by hale old dames in quaint attire! What delicious scent of flowers filling the sparkling air of morn! Provincial France must rise betimes to get all that market gear into town so early. In the provinces you find the undying strength of Old Gaul.

PEASANT PROPRIETORS.

Long residence in the provinces is necessary to understand, and sympathise with, the life of the French peasantry. It is possible, however, even in a short stay,

* "The French peasant," says M. Faguet, in his essay on George Sand, "is hard, greedy, unremitting in his work, and exceedingly set on making money. But he is also very sensitive in his ideas of justice, and is full of fairness and sense. To strangers he shows himself shy and sly; but with folk of his own class he is sympathetic and helpful, and infinitely more refined in sentiment than he gets credit for. He is devoted to his own kith and kin, respectful to those who are aged, and is firmly rooted in his own family life. His affections are deep, patient, and life-long. He is easily touched by what is marvellous, his head is full of legendary lore, and of superstitions, both terrifying and gracious, that live in the depths of his soul."

to pick up many interesting particulars from the conversation of professional men of peasant extraction. I attended a series of lectures once on French Rural Life, but these were mainly taken up with folk-lore and superstitions.

There can be no doubt that the soil of France owes much of its extraordinary productiveness to the untiring industry of its five and a half millions of *peasant proprietors.* The land, as Professor Walker well says, is *cultivated mainly by those who own it*, and, in consequence, the soil improves from age to age owing to the deep, direct, and personal interest which every farmer feels in keeping up the value of his little estate. The parcel of ground on which he works from sunrise to sunset, has been his father's before him, and will descend to his children when he is no more. It is, no doubt, true that, economically speaking, the large farm is far more productive than the small one, since the former allows of a greater division of labour and requires less cost in the management. From the point of view of the race, however, it is absolutely certain that peasant proprietorship is to be commended. *The feeling of ownership is the strongest antidote to revolution.* It was a profound saying of Sismondi that "wherever you find hereditary farmers or small proprietors, there you find also that ease, that security, that independence, that confidence in the future, which assure, at the same time, happiness and virtue." The best system of land tenure is surely that which produces the greatest number of healthy, contented, industrious, and patriotic citizens. The land "where wealth accumulates and men decay," suffers

from the very worst kind of poverty. The population of France is not increasing, but it is certainly not decaying. It is hard to say what would happen if the rural population became greatly augmented, for intensive culture could not be carried much further in certain districts, and many of the lots could not, if sub-divided, furnish subsistence to the cultivators. The stationariness of France, in the matter of population, is thus not an unmixed evil.

No contrast, it seems to me, could be greater than that between the Paris workman and the stolid tiller of the soil. The former eats and drinks well: you may see him at the open-air tables of the common restaurants, progressing vigorously through the menu and the bottle of claret. The rustic *may* have an occasional bout on market-day, but, as a rule, his fare is exceedingly plain. The chief stay to his stomach is vegetable soup. Tea and coffee he rarely touches. A more unrevolutionary man than the French peasant it would be hard to find. That bit of land which he cultivates is the whole world to him. He is so close-fisted and unsentimental that, according to the rhyme, he would rather lose his wife than his horse:

> "Bon Dieu en haut,
> Prends ma femme, laisse mes chevaux."

An infinite power of taking pains is the leading characteristic of the French peasant proprietor. His industry is stimulated by the knowledge that the improvements he effects will be to his own personal advantage. The small French farms are admirable for

dairy-produce and the rearing of fowls. The cultivation of the vine and the olive, which require just such close attention as the small farmer is able and willing to give, could never have been carried to their present perfection under such a system of land tenure as prevails in Britain.

A WELL-INFORMED OLD FRENCHMAN.

M. Perrin is proprietor of a small private boarding-house in a quiet street about a mile from the great and majestic Cathedral of Tours; and lives in his own house, which is conducted for him by a paid manageress with the imposing name of Madame Blondel de Medrano. Those who are fond of arranging other people's business for them, often think it would be well if the two would make a match of it, seeing that the manageress is a widow and M. Perrin is a bachelor. There is not more gossip in France than in England, *but there is as much;* and it is a fact that the two would make a most diverting couple, he being small and thin, and she tall and most expansive. The old bachelor is, I am happy to say, a loyal son of the Church: a framed card in his bedroom, signed by an official of the Vatican, proves that he, like an obedient child, prostrated himself at the feet of the Sovereign Pontiff in the year 1888, and got whatever blessing was going at the time. M. Perrin carries his sixty years lightly, and has been prosperous all through life. You could not find anywhere a more suave and courteous gentleman, or one more nimble at finding out a subject that interests you and letting the talk run on that. When an English tourist calls at his

place, he never fails to emphasise the fact that the establishment contains an excellent bath-room. (It is a common belief in France that an Englishman will take a cold bath on the slightest provocation.) "I know English customs well," he says; "before the war of 1870, there was a large colony of English here, and I was at school with many of the boys; but since the war, alas! we have fewer of them; they go further now, to Switzerland or the Riviera." M. Perrin is as good as a guide-book if you want to visit the magnificent châteaux of Touraine. He has a map of the province, and can tell you the best roads, methods, and days for each, adding historical details of gay kings and fair romantic dames. For Francis I., patron of art and lover of a fair face, M. Perrin, like all Frenchmen I ever knew, has a specially warm side. If the tourist is a Scot, he will at once refer to the Scots Guard of Louis XI. and say (what can only be contradicted with hesitation) that *Quentin Durward* is Sir Walter's finest novel. "Plessis-lès-Tours is quite near us," he will continue, "but there you see nothing but stones and ruins and a dungeon.* Go rather to Chenonceaux, where your

* Plessis-lès-Tours, which Sir Walter describes so powerfully in the novel mentioned, does not, as some of the guide-books say, contain *des ruines imposantes*. My visit to the place enables me to certify that the account given by Mr. Henry James the novelist, is accurate: "You enter a yard encumbered with rubbish and a defiant dog; and an old woman emerges from a shabby lodge and assures you that you stand deep in historic dust. A red building, which looks like a small factory, rises on the ruins of the favourite residence of the dreadful Louis. It is now occupied by a row of night scavengers, whose huge carts are drawn up in a row before

queen and ours (for she was ours too for a little), Mary Stewart, spent the first of her three honeymoons." I never grudged paying my bills in M. Perrin's. He threw in so much history for nothing.

A PROFOUND SCHOLAR.

The scholar of the table is M. Ulysse Michel, a man of refined looks, but delicate and ailing. He eats very sparingly, passes many of the courses, has certain dishes specially cooked for himself, never drinks wine, and never smokes. He is a ripe educationist and a Fellow of the University of France. The latter is the highest distinction in the land, and means long and laborious study as well as immense powers of absorption. There are few "Fellows" that do not show the evil effects of the exacting years of study needed to prepare for their examination, which is competitive in character and all the more difficult for being so. Our friend came out victorious, but with an enfeebled stomach. Was the game worth the candle? I doubt it. Dull men with nerves of iron, strong constitutions, and accurate memories, to whom any one page of print is just as interesting as any other, who find as much or as little pleasure in reading a dull as a sprightly author, are the men ordained by nature to succeed in examinations without much personal hurt. But there are not many

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it." The old woman, whom Mr. James refers to, is still in attendance, and her story does not vary. She tells visitors (a dozen times daily in summer) how Louis punished malefactors by putting them into iron cages in a damp dungeon—*comme des oiseaux, messieurs, comme des oiseaux.*

such. M. Michel is not one. He, with an artistic, nervous nature, susceptible to every beauty of thought and style, should never have set himself to wage war with the formidable volumes of verbose bores. I fear M. Michel has lost somewhat in originality through his copious acquaintance with other people's opinions. But his mind is a rich cabinet, and in his conversation with you he brings out things new and old. And there is a certain simplicity in his views on life and politics that could only come from a detached scholar. Full-fed on books, he is starved on the side of life. He is not the sort of man you would trust with the management of a decaying laundry. It is curious to note that the servants in the house attend on him and defer to him as if he were a child. In a certain sense, M. Michel is an asset to the boarding-house. Visitors who come to improve their knowledge of French are told by M. Perrin: "We have a great scholar in the house, a Fellow of the University of France—un agrégé—you will sit beside him at table and discuss literature with him." I had the pleasure of sitting beside him at meals for a month, and I hope politeness did not make him perjure his soul when he said to me at parting: *vous m'avez fait passer de bons moments.* He never hinted that there might have been a *mauvais quart d'heure*, but then the French are *very* polite.

A LOVER OF THE SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD.

The cultured gentleman to whom I have referred in the preceding paragraph, did not think it a waste of time to discuss with me many matters of a literary and

philosophical character. He availed himself very fully of the encouragement I gave him to talk of his student days at the Sorbonne, of his examinations, his books, and his comrades. I have already alluded to the queer enthusiastic bookworms that haunt the halls of that seat of learning, bent on the pleasures of knowledge and research. M. Michel had a kindly word for these unpaid zealots of literature, particularly one named Pierre Silvaine who had devoted a whole life-time to the peculiarities of the subjunctive mood. "Happy is that man," said M. Michel, "who has some subject of literary interest, in the pursuit of which he is never tired. Work becomes play to him, and no trouble of investigation is irksome. Should his hobby be one that other people can enter into, so much the better, for then his conversation will not be importunate. I know some scholars who have chosen their pet topics in regions *too* distant and recondite for the ordinary man. Nobody could deny that Pierre Silvaine was a man of strong and original brain. Unfortunately, early in his career, he developed a most peculiar affection for the subjunctive mood. For the rest of his life he hardly thought of anything else. When he read the masterpieces of ancient or of modern times, it was not for the immortal beauty and grandeur of the thought, it was solely to hunt for subjunctives. Finally he came to the conclusion that the indicative mood was a debased and invertebrate form of the subjunctive, the latter being the mood of moods, the mood of glory, the mood without which grammar would cease to be. Pierre could not hold his tongue, once he made this momentous dis-

covery. He aggressively set about forcing people to direct their attention subjunctive-wards. He wrote letters of enormous length to the educational magazines, pouring scorn on the barren pates who adhered to the traditional views. I do not think he made a single convert. By and by the magazines, regarding him as an unmitigated bore, would not print his letters, and he, unabashed, began to publish books of a heart-rending character which did not, I regret to say, obtain the wide circulation he anticipated. Pierre's case is a lesson to those who think they can fly in the face of tradition. It is not in religion alone that a man can become a heretic: certain men seem to have the knack of landing themselves in heresy, no matter what subject they take up. I do not say that Pierre's views were wrong. Perhaps he lived before his time. It is possible that some future investigator may discover him and write a eulogistic biography. My regret is that Pierre's talents were thrown away on a subject of trivial importance. It is not worth while getting angry and losing money on a subject so uninteresting to humanity, as the theory of the subjunctive mood. A hobby, especially a literary one, should have some reference to personal culture and human progress."

THE LATIN GENIUS.

It is rather annoying to hear French scholars calmly and politely assuming that they, and they alone, can interpret the spirit of the ancient Latin writers. *But the patriotism of nations is built on such unsubstantial assumptions.* Let M. Michel speak: "We can under-

stand the Latin writers better than you Britons can, because our language is Latin in origin, and the blood in our veins is Latin. You have been set apart in an island and out of touch with the main stream of ancient tradition. Again, our Christianity is that of the Latin Church, whereas yours has been Anglicised and cut off entirely from Roman headquarters. The gusts of Presbyterianism and Puritanism, that are always blowing in Britain, have Hebraised your society to excess, and directed your thoughts too much to the topics of sin and salvation. We don't give so much attention to sin in the abstract as you do, and, while we are as moral as you are, we judge authors, ancient and modern, less from the ethical than from the artistic point of view. We are a much more tolerant nation than the English, and we readily resign ourselves to the Horatian view of life without any glum sermonising theranent. Listen to what our poet Banville says, addressing himself to a young man: 'O young man that art a stranger to melancholy, and fair and bright as the sun of Italy, I charge thee to preserve well that splendid folly of thine. Therein lies wisdom. To love wine and beauty and the divine springtime—that is enough: all else is vain. Smile even when fate is frowning. And when the primrose reappears, throw her flowers into your wine-glass. What remains when the body is below the sod, shut fast in the tomb? Naught, save the memory of having loved during two or three months of May. "Seek out the causes and effects of things;" cry the austere dreamers of philosophy. Vain words, and naught but words. Pluck we the roses now!' That

is the genuine Horatian note of gaiety which is so much akin to the genius of France. The Puritan is always placing religion first, and if his natural man consents for a moment to enjoy the Pagan beauty of Latin verse, he feels it necessary to read himself a homily by way of penance. A Catholic, whose religion is fixed for him, and who leaves all doctrinal controversy to those who have been trained to the business, is bound to have far more *spare time on his hands* for general culture and artistic amusement than a Puritan, who is engrossed by the literature of disputation and self-defence. The Puritan would like to kill the old Adam, instead of civilising him. The process of civilising is the one we prefer, for the old man *won't be killed*."

THE SPLEEN.

There is another curious tradition in France to the effect that the English are specially subject to what is called the *spleen*. The word is an old one, and we now express its idea by using other nouns such as *dejection*, *ennui*, *boredom*, and so on. Nothing will ever persuade the French that we are not a yawning and hypochondriac nation. *We live*, some of their writers seem to think, *in a land of mists*, and cannot but be troubled with the vapours in consequence. It seems a pity to lay a sacrilegious hand on such venerable myths, for they answer that need for unkind generalisation that is so much felt in discussing a foreign nation.

A glance round French literature of the nineteenth century shows us, in addition to an army of cheery wits of the old Gallic stock, a wonderfully strong band of

sad geniuses, who easily surpass anything that England produced during the same period in the way of grief and utter woe. At the very threshold of the century stands that eloquent and dejected patrician and (with reverence be it spoken) plaintive humbug, Chateaubriand,

"De la vie accusant l'inanité profonde."

I can discover nothing in our literature so depressingly noble and heart-rendingly impressive as the poems of Vigny and Madame Ackermann. Did Byron ever poetise *ennui* so dolefully as Musset?

"Si mon cœur fatigué du rêve qui l'obsède,
À la réalité revient pour s'assouvir,
Au fond des vains plaisirs que j'appelle à mon aide,
Je trouve un tel dégoût que je me sens mourir."

The objection may be made that much of the modern French pessimism is either affectation or the boredom that arises from disordered nerves. I admit at once that there *is* a deal of pose, and also that nature is wont to scourge, with the well-merited whips of melancholy, him who breaks the laws of right living, be he poet or clown. My contention is that, to-day, under the sunny skies of France, there is as much hypochondria as in "misty" England. The most popular author in France at the present time is M. Pierre Loti, whose leading feature is (as the French critics say) an *incurable pessimism*. The French minor poetry of our time is full of *l'impersonnel et banal Ennuyé*, and of a variety of persons who are tired of life but reluctant to die. A course of Molière and Rabelais is the best antidote to such affected pessimism.

TWO CALEDONIAN TALES.

It struck me one day, when M. Michel was talking pretty dogmatically on the splenetic and morose character of the English as contrasted with the French, that I might try some Caledonian anecdotes on him by way of experiment. I chose these anecdotes with a view to illustrate the British love of sport. One of my tales had to do with a storm at sea, and the other with dexterity in skating, two subjects far enough removed from the experiences of a vine-growing country. At the conclusion of these stories, he was in a miserable state of collapse. Let me here recount the tales that had such a demoralising effect on this worthy Frenchman.

"It is usual," said I, "in some of the Hebridean steamers of small dimensions, for passengers to stretch themselves on the long tables in the tiny cabin and seek repose there. Such a device is almost obligatory on a man when he is suddenly shot down the steep stairs from the upper deck, only to find that all the soft seats are already occupied, and that there is nothing to aim at except the mahogany. During a time of furious gales out in the Minch, I saw two peace-loving gentlemen engaged in an unintentional duel with each other on the surface of a broad table. As the boat rolled and pitched, the gentleman on the right was, by the action of gravity, propelled against his friend on the left, and *vice versâ*. When A saw B driven his way, he endeavoured to avert a collision, but quite unavailingly, for the ocean insisted on a fight. B's revenge regularly came due, for every second minute he was pitched

against his prostrate friend, and sparks of sulphurous language resulted from the impact. Such a duel was most exhausting. Handbags and portmanteaus were utilised to break the force of the clashing encounter. At times a sea-roll of exceptional magnitude would land the longitudinal combatants, with all their defensive weapons, on the floor of the steamer. The passengers, lying seasick on the couches round, *retained a continuous interest in the fray*, and occasionally stopped their retching to indulge in a hysterical laugh or a feeble cheer. Thus it is demonstrated that even at death's door (so to speak), a true-born Britain does not lose his love of sport. Say not in future that Britain is a glum and misty land. Rather call it the home of *sport* and *humour*. It is, to my mind, highly significant that you Frenchmen have had to adopt both these words into your language, seeing that there was no sufficient vocabulary in French to express the meaning they convey."

M. Michel laughed so immoderately at the picture of the deep-sea duel (or perhaps at the original nature of the French in which it was given), that it was some time before he was calm enough to make any reply. "The story is undoubtedly facetious," he said, "and all the more interesting to me, because, living in the interior of France, I am not used to tales that have a flavour of salt water. It may be true that we French people do Britain an injustice in calling it *morne* and *sombre*, but prejudice is hard to uproot. If you have any more tales of sport in your memory, I should be glad to hear them. You need not spare any details of action, place, or character, for it is precisely the presence

of such details that distinguishes humour from wit, that is to say concrete from abstract. Humour always palpitates with actualities, whereas wit is more frequently an affair of the study."

I did not feel disposed to question the accuracy of M. Michel's distinction between wit and humour. *That* would have been somewhat indelicate after his great kindness in laughing at the story. He presented a curious spectacle—tears of mirth in his eyes and a definition on his tongue. (From the following tale, I omit the annotations necessary for a French listener.)

"Another incident, tending to prove the ineradicable love of sport in the British soul, came under my eye during a season of severe frost a few winters ago. It was in that kind of weather when the hard pastures are powdered with rime, and the milk on the breakfast table has a taste of turnips. A farmer near Glasgow, who has a loch of some size within the area of his lands, was aware one morning that its surface was covered with a smooth sheet of splendid ice. After he had looked at the phenomenon for some time, and observed the low rays of the winter sun glinting and sparkling on the icy floor, he determined to advertise his loch in the newspapers as a desirable pastime-ground for skaters, at a shilling a head. After despatching his advertisement (which was squeezed into the minimum of words), he ordered the farm-hands, who were not over-busy owing to the time of year, to brush up the surface of the ice with besoms. Next day a crowd came out from town, and shillings dropped merrily into the farmer's wallet. Unfortunately, a country field gives

more scope than a theatre door for the rascality of those who wish to elude payment. The farmer, putting skates on his own shoon, pursued one defaulter who had leapt the fence without paying. There was great merriment among the company on the ice as they watched the farmer trying to collect his money. He fell frequently, for he was a poor skater, and indulged in the most blustering and heedless language. But the defaulter, amid great applause, whirled round him in artistic diagrams, and kept smiling blandly and nodding in recognition of the cheers. All the other skaters stopped to see the result. While sketching the figure eight by means of one foot, the adept, owing to excitement or miscalculation, ran into the farmer, and the two came sprawling down on the ice in company. A score of spectators at once expressed their willingness to pay the shilling. I am happy to say that the farmer *would not take the money*, and generously offered the performer the run of the loch for nothing if he would come back and give another exhibition."

A SAINT'S DAY FÊTE.

During my stay in M. Perrin's establishment, the *saint's-day* of his manageress fell due, and there was a grand dinner and a dance. The repast was a credit to French cookery; the wine, in which we drank prosperity to Madame, was such as rejoices the heart of man; the toasts were hearty and appropriate; and there was a sound of decorous revelry and dancing till far on in the night. The garden of the place was lit up with hanging, bright-coloured lanterns, and here and there, under

the foliage, were tables, glasses, wines, and sirops. The night was one of windless calm: nothing disturbed the gay throng except clans of midges and fluttering moths. I remained smoking on the balcony, and could see Madame and her friends sitting under what she calls *a secular tree* (un arbre séculaire), chatting and smiling, and quaffing in the red and yellow glimmer. The trees looked green enough during the day, but on that occasion, what with the star-pierced shades of night, and the artificial colours of the lanterns suspended in the branches, there was such a piebald confusion of shifting tints, as modest nature never knew by day. Even a Puritan could appreciate the scenic effects of wine-bibbing in such a garden and at such a time.

The custom of saint's-day celebrations is one that has not been naturalised in Great Britain. A French lady, whose Christian name is Margaret, is always liable to be fêted on that day of the year that is set apart for the honour and worship of St. Margaret. Such a custom has a certain quaint beauty, and must be pleasing to the saints if aught below touches the ken of those pure spirits in Paradise. One of the Americans in the house was chagrined to think that the practice could not be transplanted to the United States. "In America," said he, "some of our Christian names might hunt long enough before they could get saints to match their spelling. Dwight L. Moody, Ira D. Sankey: where could these devout men have found the excuse for a saint's-day dinner? I am a greenhorn in hagiology, but I am pretty sure there is no St. Dwight or St. Ira."

The lightness and gaiety of the French character is well seen in the celebration of such a festival as I have described. We Britons do not possess (and perhaps our climate is to blame) the childlike vivacity and glee which the natives of the French provinces throw into the amusements of life. Long ago, Goldsmith, journeying through mid-France, at a time when, according to every historian, the peasantry of the country was ground down by the iron heel of an insolent aristocracy, found material for a most engaging picture of life on the banks of the Loire:

> "How often have I led the sportive choir,
> With tuneless pipe beside the murmuring Loire,
> Where shady elms along the margin grew,
> And, freshened from the wave, the zephyr flew.
> And haply though my harsh note, faltering still,
> But mocked all tune, and marred the dancer's skill;
> Yet would the village praise my wondrous power,
> And dance, forgetful of the noontide hour."

Many have doubted the truth of Goldsmith's portrayal: nevertheless, he has brought out well the politeness and forgetful mirth of the French nation. Rural France has not greatly changed its character since the days of the Revolution, and still believes in the association of saint's days and merry-making.

A COURTIER EN RETRAITE.

One of the permanent guests in the boarding-house was Monsieur Pinard, who called himself, on his visiting card, *courtier en retraite*, which does not, of course, mean "absconding courtier," but "retired broker."

Perhaps he had a pension. His personal appearance was very much against him, for he was short, coarse, dark in hue, and greasily fat. He was always very polite to me, but I could not help thinking, in my talk with him, that he stood greatly in need of a daily splash in the Loire. Strange stories circulated in the house regarding this man. It was said that he had a great variety of disguises in his apartment, and that he fluttered about by night, like an owl, in quest of adventures. One of the English visitors declared that he had met Pinard, in the attire of a priest, late one night, in an unfrequented side-street. At table, Pinard was notorious for appetite and thirst, and I have often seen him drinking and dreaming in cafés between the meals. It was quite clear that he was an incubus in the place, and that Madame would have liked to be rid of him. She would come occasionally to the English visitors and ask them if M. Pinard had been annoying or importuning them in any way; and yet, it was not uncommon to see her talking long and quite familiarly with him in the garden of an afternoon. He was looked upon as a man who followed some mysterious occupation—that of spy or exile or royalist under hiding. The first day of my stay in the boarding-house, he came to me and offered to show me the antiquities of Tours; but as he had all the appearance of long-standing aversion to soap, I declined his offer with thanks. He seemed to have plenty of time on his hands, and to have nothing in particular to do, at least between the meals. His age would be about fifty-five, certainly not the time of life at which an ordinary Frenchman would

think of retiring from business. If his occupation was that of a spy, as some of us were inclined to think, he was badly chosen for the purpose, as no one would willingly make such a man the repository of a secret. It would need a detective story-writer to do complete justice to all the possibilities evoked by the countenance, demeanour, and habits of this *courtier en retraite*. He is the only mysterious Frenchman I ever met.

A JOVIAL SWEDE.

I am unable to understand why there are so many Swedes roaming about in France. It is possible, indeed, they may have felt the same difficulty with respect to *us*, but I hardly think so. These light-haired and amiable Septentrionals visit Paris and Touraine in large numbers, and have a high reputation for paying their way. I wonder where Bindernagel is at the present moment. Wherever he is, I am certain he is happy and full of song. His favourite melody dealt with the attractions of a Swedish maiden named Charlotta, and the chorus was of a most diverting and yet simple character: Char-lot-ta; ta, ta, ta, ta, ta, was repeated about ten times with ingenious variations of tone, rhythm, and accent. Bindernagel was meant to be a doctor (so he said), and was visiting France for the purposes of enlarging his area of medical experience. He had been in the United States, with a similar object, for two years, and had brought back with him a certain fluency in rattling off English phrases that were packed with the maximum of "guessing" and "calculating." He had the largest and most overcoming smile I ever saw on

any man's face. One of the young Englishmen in the hotel went up to him one day, and jocularly asked for a consultation. Bindernagel solemnly felt the lad's wrist, examined his tongue, ausculted him, and tapped his back in the most deliberate, scientific, and conscientious way. "I guess I know what's wrong with you," said he, after a long and ostentatious reflection, "I've found you out; you've undoubtedly been *committing some dietetic error;* you needn't deny it; I see it written in your face. I don't propose to prescribe for your stomach. I prefer to attend to your general health first. I calculate, mark you, that whatever is good for the system as a whole, is, *ipso facto*, good for the special disease in particular. You need cheering up, and I guess *Charlotta* is the best tonic I could give you." And he forthwith proceeded to sing that unique lyric, the patient joining heartily in the chorus. In such fashion did this Child of the North diffuse merriment around him. No one ever saw him reading any scientific treatise. If he has started practice in Sweden, I am sure he will have many patients, and that he will cure them with his smile, which, being good for the system as a whole, will also be good for the special disease in particular.

A VERY SYSTEMATIC AMERICAN.

A very bright, tall, and muscular American resided in this boarding-house during my stay, Dr. Hunter by name—a lecturer in Classics in some Western University. He had an excellent knowledge of German, which he kept fresh and up-to-date by annual visits to the Fatherland. No sooner were the gates of his college

shut than he booked his passage for Europe. He had been for six weeks in Germany before he came to Touraine. I admired the systematic way in which he set about improving his French. He got hold of a young Frenchman who was studying English, and the two of them read together for mutual benefit. I rather think Hunter had the best of the bargain: he was so restlessly active, so determined to hit on the precise idiom to express his thought, so anxious to know wherein *this* synonym differed from *that* other, that he kept the young Frenchman constantly talking, explaining, and gesticulating. Hunter struck me as an excellent example of the American—he had come to France for a specific purpose, and was determined not to allow the warm sun of Touraine to drowse him into an inefficient and non-business langour. Learning was the object of his trip, and his efforts to establish an equivalence of value between the dollars expended and the culture gained, were truly and touchingly transatlantic. He kept himself in good form by a daily dip in the Loire, and by scientific exercises on Sandow principles. His chief diversion was singing, but even in that there was also a suggestion of programme, seeing that it was Béranger's songs he was trying to interpret. To do him justice, he had an excellent voice. You could tell the time of day if you knew what he was at. When the *Roi d'Yvetot* came rolling out of Hunter's window on the afternoon air, each smoker in the garden would take out his watch to see if it was keeping time, and say: "It must be two o'clock; there's Hunter at his Béranger." It gives me pleasure to state that he never missed a ser-

vice at the Protestant Temple, and, when he came back to his rooms, he might be heard repeating the sermon to himself with great oratorical fervour.

THE AMERICANS IN FRANCE.

The Americans have taken possession of France, and feel absolutely at home in it. But, indeed, the American has the knack of making himself at home anywhere. He moves about in his own country among so many different nationalities, that no new land, speech, or prospect, can cause him protracted surprise. To the credit of his patriotism it must be said that, even in the presence of the most august historical relics and palaces of Europe, he remains quite calm and never forgets that he belongs to the Greatest Republic on Earth. He is not at all averse to giving good advice to those who will listen to him, witness the fine homily delivered by Mr. Roosevelt, in the Sorbonne, in April, 1910. I wonder what those keen-witted, ultra-refined Athenians of Paris thought of the brawny, breezy sportsman who, after killing thousands of wild animals in Central Africa, came a-lecturing on political morality and the ethics of race culture.

It is necessary to distinguish between the opulent tourist who is "doing" the country, and the student who, earnestly and well, is employing every moment of his time in self-improvement. Every four or five years, an American professor will take a year in Europe to keep himself intellectually alert, his University defraying part of the cost. The practice is an excellent one, and all concerned reap the benefit. The greatest genius

alive is bound to get torpid and humdrum if he lectures, year in year out, without a break, on the same topics. By coming, as a listener, to the Universities of France and Germany, the American teacher is bound to improve himself enormously. He goes back to his work in the West full of new mental and physical life. It would be well if all teachers, whether of literature or religion, could have, every four or five years, some lengthy break in their monotonous round of work, in order that they might garner new ideas, and have time for fresh thought.

The rumour that American husbands are unusually pliable to the wishes of their wives, seems well-grounded. It is quite common to encounter a whole American family (*minus* the father, who is at home making dollars), enjoying a tour in France that will last for a couple of years. The mother and children move leisurely from place to place, and the hard-working father may pay them a flying holiday visit in the summer. A gentleman of my acquaintance, wishing to have practice in French, arranged for a month's stay in a country-house in the neighbourhood of Blois. When he arrived, he found there were two loquacious Americans resident in the house. These two, mother and daughter, had a peculiarly rich nasal intonation, but no special love for literature. There was very little French conversation at that table; and my friend returned at the month's end no whit improved in the language of Molière, and even, as his friends thought, somewhat changed in his own. The ladies had been fully a year in France and were in no hurry to re-cross the ocean.

I have nothing but pleasant memories of the Americans I met on my travels. Each and all of them gloried in being citizens of the Great Republic, whatever their European origin might be. Their earnestness to see all that could be seen and to make the most of their time, were admirable. Sometimes I have heard them express their disappointment in language of great vigour and point. A French election, for example, pleases an American only in so far as it enables him to enlarge, with pride, on the sublimity of an electoral contest in the States. "No processions," he will say, "no flags, no mammoth conventions, no thrilling watchwords; why, the French don't know how to run an election!" And it is true that, but for the placards, an election nowadays in France, makes little difference in the look of the country.

ON THE RIGHT BANK OF THE LOIRE.

On the right or Saint Symphorien side of the Loire, reached by crossing from Tours by that immense bridge that takes so long to get over, there is the boarding-house of Mlle. Bosquet, situated off the road in grounds of diversified beauty. The property is, convent-wise, surrounded by high, old walls, in the crumbling joints of which the sharp-eyed lizards lie and enjoy the sun. Inside there are shady avenues of foliage, fruit-trees of all kinds, from the succulent green fig to the tantalising peach that ripens in espalier against the wall. There are vines, too, in ordered rows, that the Touraine sun mellows for the vintage and the wine-press. The ground is undulating; there are seats and summer-houses; and

colour enough on all sides to please the most exacting of artists. The landlady is a tall, dark lady, unmarried, and a devout Catholic. Priests come about her a good deal. Most glib of utterance is she, and her talk, like that of all French ladies of education, is, in a very high degree, animated, witty, and refined. It is almost incredible that this lady, so fastidious is she in the observance of French decorum, will not, even in the broadest of daylight, go into the town of Tours unaccompanied. There is one law for American and English girls, and another for French. It is quite evident, too, that her ideas are anti-republican; for in any reference to the main street of Tours, she will call it *rue royale*, the old denomination before the war, and not, as it is now printed, *rue nationale*. This lady caters for a miscellaneous crowd of visitors, mainly of English speech. Her charges are moderate, her table good, her servants alert and amiable. I think I can detect, for all her politeness, a slight strain of disrespect for the English and the Americans. She must laugh at them behind their back. To one young, brisk American girl, who was a severe critic, in copious but shaky French, of certain peculiarities of life in France, and who used the word *dégoûtant* with that frequency so noticeable in the talk of young ladies, Mlle. Bosquet merely said that she, the American, had *des idées bien arrêtées*, which means (1) your views are charmingly clear; (2) you are just a little bit too sure of yourself; (3) you are an ignorant and conceited minx. The American got no further than the first interpretation and felt flattered.

THE ALLIANCE FRANCAISE.

Let me here pay a very warm tribute to that admirable body, the *Alliance Française*, for its untiring and successful efforts in organising Holiday Courses, during the summer, for the benefit of English and Scotch teachers who wish to improve their knowledge of the language and literature of France. A continental trip, in itself, is good, but how much better if some solid professional good is superadded! When in Tours, I heard that a three weeks' course of lecturing was to be given, and, on making enquiries, found that I might have the privilege of attending. I cannot speak too highly of the qualifications of the French gentlemen who conducted these most interesting classes. One professor took up the wide subject of French comedy, and gave us a vivid résumé of its manifold developments from the queer old farce of *Pathelin* down to the airy comedies of Labiche. As his elocution and facial expression were most apt and illuminating, and his memory a perfect storehouse of striking passages, he easily kept the unflagging attention of his auditors. As was said of Fénelon, you could not keep yourself from looking at him, even though you did not take in everything. He looked like a living, and very much moving, incarnation of the comic spirit of his country. The coming joke gleamed in his eye before it was formulated by his tongue. One of his shrugs was as good as two pages of notes. There was a vast amount of finesse in his calculated embarrassments. I particularly remember his clever handling of Marivaux's

curiously delicate plays. The same professor gave a series of lectures on the history of Touraine, with special reference to the châteaux. The afternoon fitly ended what the morning had begun; for, after lunch, it was a case of up and away, on cycles, to inspect some of the architectural wonders spoken of in the class-room. Think of the revolving spokes of thirty cycles, glittering under the sun of Touraine, and swiftly disappearing along those broad highways! A training-college on wheels! A seminary in the saddle! A University gliding along on Dunlop tyres! French by the "direct method," with frequent intervals for refreshments! A bottle of Vouvray, you must know, invariably improves an Englishman's accent, and suggests the most racy and unexpected idioms to his tongue.

I have mentioned but one of the lecturers at these fascinating courses, but they were all highly cultured men. The authors commented upon vary from year to year, but Touraine remains the same and the Vouvray never deteriorates. If anyone, on the strength of this commendation, goes to Tours and attends the lectures, he will come back with a great respect for the French language and people, and a firm determination to return next year for another holiday under the blue sky of Touraine.

LA FONTAINE.

I must not neglect to mention a piece of advice that was given to the students at these classes by one of the lecturers. "Do not forget," he said, "O sojourner in French territory, that every native you meet, indoors or

out, has been *brought up on the fables of La Fontaine*, and can repeat from memory the masterpieces of that immortal versifier. The fact is not mentioned in any guide-book, but is, nevertheless, of the utmost importance to any foreigner who desires to gain an insight into our national psychology. These fables are extremely clever, pictorial, and entertaining—perfect gems of light, witty verse—masterpieces of the story-teller's art, unrivalled in any European tongue. Our earliest instructors feed our minds with La Fontaine's fables, and the result is, that a Frenchman, every day of his life, lets slip some phrase or idiom that owes its characteristic tone and colour to the racy old raconteur. The lines of La Fontaine have wrought themselves so subtly into the bright and variegated web of French speech, that, really, the best way to acquire a knowledge of French idiom is, not by learning off the phrases of grammar and text-book, but by giving one's days and nights to La Fontaine.

'Cœur tendre, esprit profond dans une âme enfantine.'

"The wisdom of the fables is not that of the sober moralist: it is rather the witty and light comment of a kind-hearted man of the world on the conjunctures of life and society. There is hardly anything he does not touch with his nimbly-running pen. 'I am interested in everything,' he says, 'games, love, books, music, town, country. There is nothing I cannot make my sovereign good, aye, even the shadowed joy of a melancholy heart.' La Fontaine is both cause and effect in France: he is a fine example of French wit and brilliancy; and, being

employed so much in the education of the young, he has made still more remarkable in the nation, those qualities he so supremely possesses. It is a shocking sin to read him in a cheap or tawdry edition."

The eulogy I have quoted may seem excessive to English readers, but it very well represents the current French opinion. La Fontaine has given such exquisite delight to France that she is willing to forgive all his sins and take him to her heart, even as Scotland embraces Burns and palliates his faults. If a hundred Frenchmen, working separately, were to draw up a list of "The Hundred Best Books," none of them would omit La Fontaine.

His talent consists in the art of making old stories interesting by a new way of telling them. When a fable of Æsop or Phaedrus passed through his brain, it became re-created or transfigured. It takes some ability to tell a new story well, but what genius is needed to captivate the world by means of old ones! Dramatic liveliness is, perhaps, his most striking characteristic. Every fable is full of quick touches that are pictorial and vivid. The animals talk according to their nature, and we see them talk. Every line encourages the artist to draw an illustration on the margin. La Fontaine's humour is best described by the Scotch word *pawky*, for it is easy to see that the satirical old gentleman, though talking of birds, beasts, and insects, is really representing the society of his own times. It seems to me that, in addition to their humour and vividness, there is some of the magic of lyrical poetry in these fables. The savoury old French

he employs, is in itself a charm. Perhaps the British author who approaches most nearly to La Fontaine's quaint and graceful ease, is the Scotch fabulist, Henryson.

AFTERNOON TEA IN THE GARDEN.

The reader is invited to be present at afternoon tea, under a spreading chestnut tree, on the grassy lawn in Mlle.'s garden. Some English students, who are attending the French Holiday Courses in the Lycée of Tours, stay in Mlle.'s house, and have invited most of their class-mates to be present. It is pleasant to see the expeditious way in which tables and chairs are carried out of doors; white table-cloth spread under the green boughs; cups, saucers, cakes, hissing urn and teapot, put in their appropriate places. A gentle, cooling breeze stirs the balmy afternoon air. Two young Oxonians, muscular and genial, aid the ladies in their tasks. Several girl-graduates, from the Welsh College of Bangor (*Les Bangoriennes* they are called), are among the helpers. About twenty people, young, old, and middle-aged, English, Russian, American, and French, partake of the delicious beverage, to the accompaniment of toothsome French cakes. Those nimble squires of Oxonians pervade the whole place, offering tea and pastry to the guests, and getting few refusals. What lady, however slim and sylph-like, could refuse even a sixth cup from lads so blithe and cheery? At last, however—as all things have an end—the tea-things are removed; the hum of conversation grows louder; the

gentlemen light cigarettes; groups of conversation are formed; some of the younger folk move along the walks and speak animatedly; the older ladies sit where they were, on rustic benches and garden-chairs. An American lady, a glib widow, Mrs. Harrison by name, entertains one group to a dissertation on Christian Science. A French professor, a universal favourite, is surrounded by the Bangoriennes, whom he is fascinating by an eloquent account of Loti's novels. One of the Oxonians, like the lord of creation that he is, has monopolised the most vivacious girl in the company, an American, to whom he is laying off the history of the Tours Cathedral. She is so enraptured by his discourse that, at his request, she promises to go with him and see the morning sun beam through the great eastern window of the Cathedral. He assures her that the flood of early sunlight, shining through the painted oriel and filling the church with glory, is a sight she must by no means miss. The other Oxonian, who has a sporting and athletic air, is explaining, in the best French at his command, to a Russian mamma and her daughter, the exciting incidents of a boat-race. He helps out his narrative by movement and gesture. Mlle. Bosquet, lady of the place, moves about from one group to another, and acts the part of hostess with a grace, tact, and unobtrusiveness that are delightful. Perhaps, in her heart of hearts, she thinks some of the guests are crazy; but she is courteous to every one. All these incidents take place within an hour and a half.

A DROLL ANECDOTE.

The good fortune that relentlessly pursued me all the time I was in Touraine, brought me into close contact, for some weeks, with the two Oxonians above mentioned. They were both joyful youths, not anaemic bookworms. Their absence of pedantry was, indeed, rather noticeable. The elder of the two (a native of Birmingham), was guilty of the following story over the tea cups:

"I was having dinner in Birmingham one day with a friend, who is deeply interested in the problems of modern education, and particularly in the various methods by which a man, who is desirous, may acquire conversational fluency in a foreign tongue. He declaimed loud and long on his favourite topic, and attracted the attention of the other diners in the room. One elderly gentleman, dressed in a style suggestive of country life, seemed to be following his arguments with close and admiring attention. At last, when my friend's breath gave out and there was a temporary lull, the old man came over to our table and asked, with graceful politeness, if he might say a word. I assured him that it was quite open to him to do so. He thereupon spoke to the following effect in a rich Irish brogue: 'Gentlemen, don't let me intrude. I am delighted to hear that you are interested in the great and noble subject of education. I should be the last man in the world to interrupt the discussion of such an important topic. But, pardon me for saying so, there are topics of moment that, I think, might reasonably compete for a

place in our thoughts, even with that which you have so admirably handled. One of these subjects is the importation of Irish butter into Great Britain in such a way as to furnish consumers with an absolute guarantee as to value, quality, and freshness. I have devoted many years of my life to an unbiased consideration of Irish butter, and have come to the conclusion, which I have embodied in pamphlet form, that *butter and politics are closely intertwined*, and that proper views on the one will exercise a beneficial influence on the other. I sent one of my pamphlets, many years ago, to Mr. Gladstone, and he died shortly after, but not before he had sent me a letter of acknowledgment, which I always carry about with me.' Hereupon the old gentleman took from an inner pocket a letter, old and worn, which he put into my hands. The paper was so greasy that, if thrown into a fire, it would have flared into flame at once like a piece of fat. The communication was a brief one: 'Mr. Gladstone has received your pamphlet on Irish butter, and is convinced that your facts and statistics are highly significant.' The G. O. M., as usual, had not needlessly committed himself to anything definite. But the ardent Irishman was quite pleased with the letter, with himself, and with us. He gave us a pamphlet apiece, shook hands fervently with us, and walked away, as happy and majestic as a king.

"'Now,' said I to my friend, 'which is the more momentous subject, the teaching of modern languages or the importation of Irish butter? You are an enthusiast and so is he; who is doing most good in the world? Your occupation is gone if the whole world

takes to Esperanto; but butter can never become obsolete.' My friend turned pale, and merely remarked, as he tapped his brow, that my question was *significant*."

REGARDING MONKS.

One day, while a little English girl of five was playing in a sand-heap in Mlle.'s garden with pail and shovel, trilling some childish song the while, I heard a footstep on the gravel, and immediately, the child, in mortal terror, flung away her playthings, and ran indoors shouting, *my father, my father*. I could not keep from laughing when the innocent cause of the panic disclosed himself. He was a sandalled monk, with dusty toes, and for all the world, as regards plumpness, jolly looks, and stature, a replica of Friar Tuck. There he stood, in a brown frock, corded at the waist, with a look of surprise and confusion on his face, and quickly uttering a heap of apologies to the child's father, who did not understand a word that was said. The monk bowed himself away, at length, with great dignity. What his errand was with Mlle. Bosquet I cannot say; it was probably a mendicant one, for, as I said, she was a devout woman, and gave gladly of her substance. I subsequently learned that there was a large brotherhood of monks in an estate near by. Their monastery was situated in spacious grounds, which the monks tilled when they were not at some holier occupation. The little girl will be eleven now, and the monks I speak of, probably on the other side of the Pyrenees.

From the point of view of personal perfection, it is,

no doubt, good for these men to retire from the world and brood on holy themes. The world gets some advantage too, for they make good chocolate and excellent liqueurs. Yet, one can understand the hot resentment of French patriots, at the withdrawal, from active citizenship, of so many able-bodied men, especially at the present day when France shows no sign of going forward in population, and when the old enemy, on the other side of the Rhine, is yearly increasing his enormous strength. It is good for us in Britain, that the office of clergyman is not deemed inconsistent with the widest exercise of citizenship. "A man's a man for a' that," and why should the clergy, who are to cheer us in sorrow and rejoice with us in happiness, be themselves deprived of a share in the most endearing affections of nature? Why, indeed, except that a celibate clergyman needs less stipend than a married one? But what Protestant grudges the extra money? What ridiculous figures some of our most esteemed ministers would cut, if they had no wives to keep them right!

THE SECULAR SPIRIT.

The action of the French Government towards these congregations of monks and, indeed, towards the Church generally, has been marked by a regrettable amount of harshness and even brutality. Perhaps the Church gave provocation to the authorities by mixing herself in political feuds, especially during the elections of 1902.

I am bound to say that, in the manifestations of the secular spirit, there is a kind of pride that more than equals the haughtiness of the ecclesiastic. "It is quite

easy to distinguish those students who have been tutored in Catholic seminaries," said a famous French scholar in my hearing, "for their brains are quite stunted with mediæval dogma. They can't see past St. Thomas Aquinas. The scientific and the sacerdotal attitudes are so utterly opposed to each other! The one kills prejudice and the other fosters it. Science bows to no authority but nature and fact. All Catholic students have their minds warped from the very first by their teachers. If they make any progress in science, it is in spite of their training, not because of it. The genuine dogmatist can't be a free investigator, seeing that he is already committed before he begins his search." These statements, in my opinion, are neither all right nor all wrong. I mention them solely with the object of showing the prideful hostility with which the secularist mind regards the ecclesiastical.

In spite of the strong rationalistic tendency of the French mind, there is no likelihood that the Modernist will prevail against the Church for some centuries yet. French women are, as a rule, devoted to religion, and get notable consolation from it. At birth, death, and marriage, the Church comes in with her gorgeous and impressive ceremonial, hallowed by long tradition, to cheer, sustain, and bless. Women can't do without ritual at the great junctures of life. Even those Frenchmen (and they are numerous) who make a mock of the Church's claims, feel their artistic tastes gratified by what they call the "harmless and pictorial services" in which she indulges. Many a man, who, in private, will tell you that the Church is the great enemy of human

liberty and progress, will be found tampering with holy water, and sending his daughter to the convent to be schooled by the nuns. Now that Royalty, with its gilded trappings, has gone out of the land, the Church has a monopoly of scenic display. Protestantism, with its bare services and its austere Sunday, will never make much progress in France. Good Catholics persistently associate Protestantism with Free Thought, indicating thereby that, when a man casts off the authority of Rome, he is no better than an infidel!

LOURDES AND ITS CURES.

I have often conversed with educated French people on the subject of Lourdes, and the extraordinary cures that have been effected there. I have no doubt whatever as to the reality of the cures, for scientific men of unquestioned eminence and impartiality, have put the genuineness of the phenomena beyond all cavil. It is a fact that people have gone to Lourdes grievously ill, and have come back completely healed. Good Catholics are ready with an explanation: "The cures are undoubtedly due," they say, "to a benign supernatural agency. We believe that the Blessed Virgin, the Mother of God, cures the poor folk who go to Lourdes in the right frame of mind, expecting a blessing. Such persons as get no benefit have lacked the necessary faith. Christianity is founded on miracles, and the fact that these are witnessed still, at Lourdes and elsewhere, is a proof that our Church is the only true Catholic Church, and that the Protestants are a set of pestilent heretics." Such were the remarks good-naturedly made

in my hearing, by an officer of the French army in the town of Tours. The friend, with whom he was arguing and who was a Protestant, laughed heartily at the soldier's inferences and said: "I do not believe the Blessed Virgin ever took it into her head to enter into competition with the doctors. She has no more to do with these cures than I have. Religious excitement, however produced, is the most powerful stimulus on earth, and far more potent than any drug. Doctors themselves are beginning to recognise the curative value of that mysterious and elemental thing called *faith*. Catholics have, perhaps, more faith than Protestants, and the more ignorant a Catholic is, the stronger is his faith or superstition likely to be. The Lourdes cures are not supernatural: they are due to a certain obscure power of the natural man, which science has not yet fully investigated. A simple peasant, with the pure image of the Virgin in his mind, and a child-like confidence in her beneficence, is almost certain, amid the excitement of fervent prayers and cries, to get at Lourdes what he goes for." Such are the contrary views one hears, the majority of people refusing to believe in the Virgin's interference. In the Cathedral of Tours I noticed, one August, a large placard, intimating that a special train, with invalids and attendants, would proceed, under ecclesiastical auspices, to the holy grotto. The announcement filled me with a profound sadness, for it brought to my mind the terrible and revolting scenes described by Zola in his novel of *Lourdes*. The chief argument against the Virgin theory is, that she, who is called the divine and merciful, won't cure the

poor wretches at home, but insists on them previously undergoing the horrors of a long railway journey over the hot plains of France. Why not at Tours rather than on that mountain?

A GRAND OLD GARDENER.

A fine old man, a gardener, was one of the fixtures in Mlle.'s establishment. Nothing could be more enjoyable than a chat with him as he tended his flowers or vegetables. He could do his work by instinct, and have enough wit left to tell a good story at the same time. He was a bearded man, with a face that told you at a glance he was possessed of good-humour, simplicity of mind, and quiet contentment. He was rather lame, as the result of privations and a bayonet wound, permanent souvenirs of the war of 1870-71. Many an afternoon I followed him about his plots, in order to hear his tales of the fighting. I learned from him that he had served under General Bourbaki on the Loire, and taken part in the terrible retreat into Switzerland, where, on crossing the frontier, the French soldiers were disarmed and interned. The old soldier wept copiously as he recalled the sufferings he and his comrades had endured. It was most affecting to hear of starving, wounded, and shoeless regiments, struggling through forest paths and rough mountain roads, with an elated and victorious enemy pressing them on the rear. I had, of course, read much historical matter relating to the war, but the old man's tales were better than any history. It was not the strategy of generals and plans of campaign of which he talked; his memory

dwelt on single items and incidents—the shooting of spies, the struggles at red river-fords, sudden flashes in mid-forest bringing death unawares, hopelessness, thirst, hunger, and cut feet. In utter darkness, early on a February morning, the French troops began their retreat through the snowy defile of La Cluse into the territories of the Swiss. Some of the wounded were so glad to be on neutral ground that they accoladed each other in their joy. The awful war dragged its bloody length along for some months after that, and the poor fellows had time enough to mend their tattered uniforms and doctor their wounded limbs, before they were allowed home. The Swiss were good to them, but were, nevertheless, glad to see them go away. I could see the old gardener smile through his tears occasionally, as his mind reverted to some of the amusing capers of the troops during their enforced leisure. It is an impossibility for the French soldier to be continuously miserable. His buoyancy and gay humour burst out even at the gates of death. It pleased the gardener greatly to have a good listener: like all Frenchmen he was very patriotic, and not greatly interested in affairs outside his own country. He told me, among other things, of the ravages wrought in the French vineyards by the phylloxera, adding that France had lost more money by that pest than by the war with Prussia. I have met few finer men in the world than this delightful and simple-minded old gardener.

IN THE SUBURBS.

Eight miles from Tours, and standing in its own grounds, surrounded by high walls, is the "paying-guest" house of Mlle. Toupet. When Tours becomes hot as a furnace under the flaming sun of midsummer; when the town air ripples with heat and creates a universal langour; when a glare, that makes you blink, is reflected from sky, pavement, and many-tinted street; when the sandy Loire becomes sandier still, and each motor on the highway sounds its horn out of a cloud of desolating dust; then, I say, it is good to be in Mlle.'s cool domain, smoking under her foliage, or plucking cherries and figs from her trees. In the evening, under the stars, you may, in your quality of paying-guest, promenade, with others of your kind, along the alleys, looking for glow-worms and listening to the Aristophanic croaking of frogs. Mlle. herself, is as striking a piece of scenery as you will see in Touraine. Her hair is glossy jet-black, and falls on her shoulders in a score of ringlets; her eyes are like her hair, black as sloes; but her face and complexion are white and withered. She is, like all French women, able and full of resource. She has goats, hens, geese, and turkeys; a garden for pot-herbs and another for flowers; a hay-loft and numerous outhouses, well stored with produce of all kinds. She has also a donkey and trap which she personally drives into Tours when she has to make purchases there. In spite of her ability, Mlle. is a trifle hysterical. She is too exacting with her servants, scolds them too much, and dismisses them from her employ-

ment for the most trivial of reasons. But, if easily upset, she can adjust her mind into tranquillity just as easily. After raking the gardener fore and aft, she can turn to educational problems and give one or more of her visitors a lucid statement of the rules and exceptions that have blossomed forth round the French past participle. Anon she will leave her guests and be heard tempestuously raging in the kitchen. I have called her Mademoiselle, which is accurate, but she rather likes to be addressed as Madame. A pretty, dark-haired girl stays permanently in the house, and calls her *aunt*.

A TRENCHANT CRITIC OF FRENCH COOKERY.

I feel that my powers of culinary expression are not wide enough to enable me to characterise fitly the menu of the average boarding-house in provincial France, especially that variety of boarding-house in which the mistress sits at table with the guests and views, with alarm, any evidence of excessive appetite they may display. I am driven, therefore, to set down the critical comments of an expert—a Yorkshireman—whom I met at Loches, where he had been examining the dungeons in which Louis XI. used to starve offenders against the State. I have observed that all who hail from Yorkshire are bluff and straightforward, have clear views on most things, are strenuous opponents of the taxation of food-stuffs, and are gifted with wonderfully graphic powers of speech. Regarding the meals in his particular *pension*, he expressed the view that they were *more conversational than filling*, more adapted for improving the mind than satisfying the stomach. (He referred, of

course, to lunch and dinner: the French breakfast he regarded as a hollow mockery, unworthy of being compared to the sumptuous British breakfast of porridge, fish, eggs, and bacon.) He had a strong suspicion that his landlady and her family, before coming to table, had gorged themselves on dainty tit-bits, in order that, by eating sparingly at the general meal, they might set an example to the foreign guests and make them ashamed to ask for a second helping. "At 12.30 we get a lunch of sapless scraps, on which we are supposed to live content till dinner, the one real meal of the day. I admit that the potatoes, omelettes, and most of the made dishes are excellent. But the beef is not good, the soup is watery, and the stewed veal regrettably tough. The asparagus and strawberries are far behind the English ones. The ordinary red wine, even when watered, is bitter and acid. How the French wine-growers have the insolence to ask tariff protection for such an unpalatable beverage, quite passes my comprehension. Oh for a draught of Bass's amber tide and a cut of good English roast-beef! The French cuisine is too light for me, and the *lack of onions is not praiseworthy.* I love meals in which there is a preponderance of *realism.*" Touching for a moment on the early breakfast, which is an isolated and bedroom meal, he strongly advised me to become a patron of chocolate. "Chocolate," said he, "is made fresh for each person, whereas the tea (or rather the teapot) is 'kept on the go' from one person to the next. Now, as the maid begins operations at 6.30, naturally, you cannot hope that the exhausted leaves will retain much of their

stimulating and healthy properties at 8.30. It is true that in the town of Tours there is a tea-room where good English tea can be procured, and thither I hie in the afternoon for something that will stay my stomach between lunch and dinner. But there should be no need for going out of doors to make up for *pension* deficiencies."

I must confess that the Yorkshireman's experiences were less fortunate than mine. At seven francs a day you cannot get all the luxuries. Godliness with contentment can be well maintained only if you give double that sum. The Briton abroad, if he wishes to live as at home, must be prepared to pay a good deal extra. In France, all the groceries are dearer than in Britain, a fact that can be easily seen by inspecting the price-lists of such a firm as Potin, and comparing these with the charges of English merchants. As regards tea, the popularity of which is yearly increasing among well-to-do townspeople, I must say that no variety worth drinking can be obtained for less than four shillings per pound. The common people do not drink tea, and are wont to regard it as a medicinal brew (*tisane*).

ON TIPS AND TIPPING.

My Yorkshire friend, who was such a trenchant censor of the Continental *menu*, had some stern things to say also on the system of tipping. To this system, as everyone knows, the tourist must conform, if he does not wish to have his holiday comfort destroyed. It is always best to treat hotel employés handsomely. Many of them have no remuneration whatever save the *pour-*

boires. Surely it is far better to stay at home for ever, than to act stingily towards the hotel servants. The views of the Yorkshireman deserve to be recorded. "It is painful," said he, "to leave a hotel or boarding-house and not feel certain whether your tips have pleased the waiters or not. It is nearly as painful to feel that, probably, you have given them more than they expected. Would that the laws of tipping were thoroughly systematised, and the penalty of transportation or hanging ordained, for either tourist or waiter, who should trespass! Then your departure from a hotel would be as devoid of terrors as your entrance. I should like to do right to these indispensable subalterns (garçons, etc.), without having them laugh at me behind my back, for giving them too much. They undoubtedly work very hard indeed, not so hard in Touraine here as in Paris perhaps. There is a certain François (his second name I know not), factotum in a Parisian boarding-house in which I sometimes stay. He is a strong-backed Norman, and the most obliging of men. His duties begin at 6 A.M. and I don't know when they conclude. If he wishes to take a quiet walk for the purposes of reflection or recreation, he must rise between four and five in the morning and sally forth then. A marvel of a man he is. I cannot understand how that robust spine of his has not been broken by the enormous trunks under which he is daily seen to stagger. He is a man of thirty, and his remuneration is ten francs a week, not including tips. These latter must fluctuate greatly. No doubt there is a certain zest given to his life by such uncertainty. But it would be

so much more comfortable for himself, and everyone who comes within the range of his influence, if his services were assessed on some definite and stringent system. He deserves a generous remuneration, and I always desire to give him such. The teasing thing about him is, that he looks upon the most liberal tip with a sigh and a grieved appearance of martyrdom. Under similar circumstances I could *reason* with an English employé, and even give a brief homily on the duty of gratitude. But François has not English enough to benefit by a moral harangue. He is typical of the whole fraternity of boarding-house servants. They all seem to look upon me as an American pork potentate, oil-trust plutocrat, or pig-iron Crœsus, and I, on parting, have to blast their overweening hopes. Many things are less needed in Europe at the present moment than an International Congress to deal authoritatively with the problem of *pourboires*." *

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* Probably no modern nation is more infested than the French with the epidemic of perquisites. The concierge, when she receives the quarter's rent, expects a substantial gratuity for herself. This gratuity is really obligatory, for, should it be withheld, the lodger's life will be embittered by a constant series of calculated annoyances. When the cook of a French family goes a-marketing, she expects to pocket a sou for every franc of outlay. This custom is so firmly established that no mistress thinks of protesting against it. Nor would the mistress gain by going to market herself, for the hucksters there would only put up the prices. It would be far easier to overthrow the French Republic and re-establish Monarchy, than to set the French nation free from the tyranny of the concierge and the cook. The only revenge possible is to impale the twain in the current novel and comedy.

A FRENCH TEACHER OF ENGLISH.

M. Chevrier, teacher of English in one of the Touraine lycées, is a good example of the Frenchman who speaks our language well. He is very tall, broad, and muscular, and was born of a peasant stock. An old dame, his step-mother, hardy and brown, and with ten thousand wrinkles on her face, resides in the house, and is not too old to help her daughter with the housework. Frugality is the watchword of that home, as of so many others in the province. Madame, the teacher's wife, is afoot every morning at five, and has a busy morning with her marketing, cleaning, and cooking. In the afternoon, however, she casts off the uniform of toil, and is garbed like a lady for the rest of the day. I look back with pleasure on the afternoon teas in that house, and on the talk and affability of the whole family. Occasionally a brother of Madame's, an officer in the garrison, would be of the company, and would humorously unbuckle his sword to show it to the children. His scarlet and gold tints added to the picturesqueness of the occasion. Though a warrior, he was a mild and conversible man.

M. Chevrier, being a teacher, and in daily, I might almost say hourly, contact with English literature, is qualified to talk in a brotherly way with any Briton he may chance to meet. I often met him, and can speak from knowledge of his high attainments. He spoke English slowly and deliberately, as if he were reading it, but what he said was absolutely accurate, both in idiom and structure. He did full justice to the letter *r*

and trilled it joyously. When I knew him, he was busy with Wordsworth and Tennyson. The following verse from Wordsworth's great *Ode* puzzled him:

> "O joy! that in our embers
> Is something that doth live,
> That nature yet remembers
> What was so fugitive."

On another occasion he confronted me with the famous *crux* in Milton's *Lycidas*:

> "But that two-handed engine at the door,
> Stands ready to smite once and smite no more."

In this case it was not the text that puzzled him so much as the explanation. The editor of the poem had written a note to the effect that the *engine at the door* meant the "Sword of the Spirit," and that it was *two-handed* because it had to be gripped by the Old and New Testament. I calmed M. Chevrier by saying that the meaning of the passage was a secret between Milton and his Maker.

I have alluded to this gentleman because he is a good type of the hard-working French schoolmaster who, year in year out, does his noble work unobtrusively, and for a rather scanty remuneration. M. Chevrier's English, let me say, had been entirely acquired in France. It is possible, however, to hear a good deal of English in Touraine, for the district is much frequented by tourists.

GLIMPSES OF FAMILY LIFE.

"When a young man sets up a house of his own," writes a famous French authority on social behaviour, "he is in no way released from any of the duties he owes to the Authors of his Days, *i.e.*, his parents. He must show to his father and mother, aye to his step-father and step-mother, all the reverence that filial love can suggest. Such admirable conduct has a divine prescription, and the reward too is indicated, viz.: 'That thy days may be long in the land.' At the family table, the old folk must have the seats of honour and be served first. They must be listened to deferentially, even when they wander a little in their talk (même s'ils radotent un peu)." I am convinced that in no European country has old age greater esteem than in France. Almost every French family I know has a grandparent residing in the house, and encompassed with the utmost esteem and affection. "May we all reach the stage of being grandfathers!" said M. Chevrier to me one day. "If ill-health and want be not there, I am pretty sure that grandfatherhood reserves for man some of the choicest sweets of life. Old age, by enfeebling the judgment a little, graciously allows vanity to peep out more and more. Old men, in France at least, are proverbially vain, and nothing ministers more to their pride than to see a continuance of their stock in their son's sons. When my worthy old *pater*, who is on the frontiers of eighty, comes to visit me, I get very little attention from him. He has no inclination to talk business with me. In fact, he is fidgetty in my presence, and would

infinitely rather be in the company of my little boy of three. When the young boy sees the old boy, there is a smile of mutual comprehension on the cheeks of both, as if the second childhood understood the first. Nature means that these extremes should meet. Away they go, hand in hand, and I am left alone, smiling with a tear in my eye. Looking out of the window, I soon see them gambolling on the grass together, glad to be rid of the incubus of my too staid presence, and feeling that they are free to say and do what they like. The laughter of the two is a strange blend of different timbres, and how their tongues rattle on! It is from the child that the grandfather gets all his news about me, and, in return, the old man tells him many a youthful prank of mine that I myself have long since forgotten. I would give a good deal to have a verbatim report of their conversation. It is pathetic to see the parting of the two of them, and the waving of handkerchiefs, and the promise of a visit again soon. 'There he goes,' I say to myself as the old man leaves, 'there he goes, after his strenuous life of honest toil. He's becoming weak and feeble, but the child clings to him, and even a frail old man loves to think himself a protector to somebody.'"

A PARABLE.

I shall give another glimpse into this gentleman's family life, in the form of a story I heard him tell.

"One quiet morning after a windy night, my two little girls discovered a helpless unfledged bird in the depths of a holly-bush in our garden. The mother-

bird, probably owing to some scare, had turned deserter, and had gone off, leaving the little thing in the nest, a piteous, rumpled, squeaking spectacle. The children brought the bird into the breakfast-room, nest and all, and tears were flowing. My wife, full of resource, procured an egg-cup, half-filled the same with water, put two drops of cognac therein, forcibly opened the birdling's beak, and squeezed in some of the mixture by means of a tiny sponge. Are you listening, ye *buveurs d'eau?* In the space of six seconds the little confused mass of down began to assume a genuine bird-like air. It was the speediest revival I have ever seen, and two drops of cognac did it. Before long, the wee creature was flapping his wings and ravenously swallowing pellets of bread and banana. The children, their tears dried, stood gazing in wonder at the swift recovery. I advised them to bring up the baby linnet (for he *was* a linnet, and entitled to the full name of *fringilla cannabina*) indoors, and make a playmate of him. He and his nest were put into a round flat dish of porcelain, and the whole covered with a warm blanket of woollen cloth. He was a very diverting little fellow and hopped and cheeped in a most comical way. The children took him out daily to the grass-plot in the garden, just to show him a bit of the world and keep him cheery. While he skipped about in the herbage, they kept watch lest some cat, with stealthy onset, might lay a deadly paw on him. Alas! he lived but a week's time, and grandeur was his undoing. So long as he inhabited the simple porcelain dish, he throve and grew and piped amain. But a grand cage had to be purchased for him,

of lofty dimensions and complicated doors of wire. Into this aristocratic palace he was thrust, and it broke his heart. He died the first night of his dignity, and now lies buried under his ancestral holly-bush, hard by a bed of fragrant wall-flowers. Heaven keep us humble, say I, for grandeur is a snare!" *

M. CHEVRIER DENOUNCES THE BEDOUIN SPIRIT.

"A man," said M. Chevrier, "should strive to be content wherever he is, be it in a castle or in a rock-dwelling. I feel reason to be thankful to Heaven every

* It was worth while going to Touraine to hear the foregoing narrative, which is almost like a prose rendering of one of La Fontaine's fables. The moral of such a story, if taken to heart, would undoubtedly *tend* to cure our souls of ambition. But such is the perversity of the human race, that several friends, to whom I have retailed the story, have allowed their minds to dwell, not on the folly of grandeur, but on the restorative powers of cognac. Touraine, as M. Chevrier went on with charming irrelevancy to say, has other proofs that happiness is consistent with a humble home. *Certain of the inhabitants live in houses that have been hewn out of solid rock.* These houses, or rather caves, are to be seen on the cliff-side at no great distance from the village of Vouvray. Nothing carries the mind back so vividly to prehistoric conditions, as the sight of dwellings that owe nothing to the architect. The French rock-dwellers look hale and hearty enough: no linnet could sing more agreeably than some of them I have seen. The main tragedies of Touraine are associated almost exclusively with those great castles (superb monuments of the builder's art), that yearly attract so many pilgrims to see their beauties. The Republic, which aims at discouraging hereditary aristocrats, has rendered these magnificent châteaux rather futile things. I have been told that some of them are actually inhabited by American tenants, who (ostentation apart), feel considerably less jovial than the tenantry of the rock, and die earlier.

day of my life that I am not a Bedouin. I believe in getting a home and *staying in it.* The great curse of the present day is restlessness, the insane desire to be on the move, to rush to the place where you aren't. I think this mania for travel is a disease of the mind, and should be seriously taken in hand by the doctors. The nerves of Europe have been gradually getting worse since James Watt and his inventions. There is a close connection between steam and hysteria. People were far happier when they travelled less, and far wiser too." "*Wiser? Are you serious? Shakespeare, you know, says that home-keeping youths have ever homely wits.*" "I am quite serious, and your quotation is on my side; firstly, because homely wits are the best; secondly, because the two gentlemen of Verona got into a great deal of trouble by not staying at home; and thirdly, because Shakespeare himself, one of the wisest men that ever lived, was not a traveller, but a thinker. Home is the best place for thinking." "*There's a fallacy in your reasoning. Do you deny that travel broadens the mind, gives new ideas, expels prejudice, and increases friendliness among the nations of the world?*" At this point M. Chevrier laughed heartily and said: "I deny nothing of what you allege. I admit that it may be good for a young man to make a journey to a foreign land and settle down there for a specific purpose, *say, study.* What I maintain is that constant travel, either at home or abroad, is not a good thing, is not educative, and is the enemy of peaceful thought. The philosopher, the man who has possession of himself, is, in the main, a stay-at-home. The roving spirit is the parent of dis-

order and pain, and is, moreover, hostile to civilisation. Society is based on the institution of home, and on the supposition that parents will stay and educate their children there. I do not think it bodes well for a nation when the Bedouin spirit becomes too prominent. There is no man whom I pity more sincerely than he who cannot sit down and think quietly, but must be always feverishly fumbling over the leaves of Bradshaw. Black Care is his constant companion! I shudder to think of his old age."

FRENCH MARRIAGES.

It was the opinion of Dr. Johnson that marriages would be just as happy as they are, if the Lord Chancellor selected the couples, and love had nothing to do with the union at all. The French nation are of Johnson's opinion. Marriage is, at its inception, a matter of pure business for them, and the romance comes after the ceremony, if it ever does come. That a young man should marry, for love, a girl without a dowry, would be regarded as a clear indication of his imbecility. It is not for us to censure the French system: it works well enough with them, and produces excellent results. Great part of its success is due to the strong filial affection of the French girl, her careful home training, and her absolute confidence in the judgment of her parents. She recognises that they wish to see her comfortably settled in life, and that their calm and worldly-wise calculations are invariably utilised for her advantage. I have no doubt whatever that the principles which preside over French match-making,

however repugnant they are to us, are better for the French nation than ours would be.

It has often been pointed out that the French have no word corresponding to our *sweetheart*. The word *amant* has a frivolous sense in modern French, and *fiancé* means "one who is engaged" simply. But a pair of sweethearts (in the fine English sense of the word), need not be engaged, though they may probably become so ere many months have passed. There is a world of difference between the usages of the two nations, and usage is, of course, reflected in language. No French young lady can have a private conversation with her lover, even though she is engaged to him, and though the marriage is to take place next week. Hence the amazement with which French readers look upon the beautiful and thoroughly English passage in Chapter II. of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, where Dr. Primrose, in talking of the marriage projected between his son and Miss Wilmot, says: "Both families lived together in all that harmony that generally precedes an expected alliance. Being convinced, by experience, that the days of courtship are the most happy of our lives, I was willing enough to lengthen the period; and the various amusements which the young couple every day shared in each other's company, seemed to increase their passion." I read the foregoing passage to M. Chevrier of Touraine. He was much amused at its contents, and said: "In France, we do everything in our power to *shorten* the period of which the good doctor speaks. It becomes a notable addition to the troubles of life to be always in the vicinity of the happy pair. By and by, we become

thoroughly sick of it, and *so do they.*" Thus real acquaintanceship, in France, begins after the marriage. The advantages are thus all on the side of the English swain. But it would be silly to censure the French usages, especially as we are wont to approve of them in the case of royal marriages.

The British tourist, whatever else he fails to see, should not miss a French marriage, and he ought to attend both the civil and the ecclesiastical celebrations. If he goes to the civil one, he will see what a dignified man the French mayor can be, and with what fluent and consequential ease he "matrimonialises" the two. Surely a tear of sympathy is due to the excited parents, the perspiring bridegroom, and that fluttering, white-robed creature with the orange-blossom in her hair. Every French marriage I have been at has been celebrated in stifling air, and the rapid speech of the mayor seemed like a meaningless rigmarole of sounds from a dreamland pageant. I am sure the young couple felt a kind of spell or wizardry being wrought on them by that scarf-girt Type of the Republic. I have seen the Provost of Inverness in his kilt, and felt, I hope, a fitting awe; but even *he* is inferior, as an imposing incarnation of officialdom, to the majestic mayor of France.

FRENCH SCHOOLS.

The French *elementary schools* are, to my thinking, far inferior to ours. The buildings are not nearly so spacious and well ventilated as the Board schools of Great Britain. It is, indeed, not an unfair criticism to

say that in *all* his public buildings and offices, the Frenchman readily tolerates bad air. French education is defective, too, in that the provision for athletics and sport is ridiculously scanty. We rightly consider that it is less dangerous to overdo games than grammar. The playground of a French school would look melancholy indeed to our footballing and cricketing youths.

The well-connected organisation of French life is nowhere better seen than in the domain of *secondary education*. The higher-class schools of the land are of two kinds, lycées and colleges, the former entirely supported by government funds, the latter only partially so. The scheme of instruction in both is practically the same, but the teachers in a lycée have a higher status and their scholarship is superior.

The usher or under-master in a college is nicknamed a *pion*. He has very light work, has board and lodgings in school, and is generally studying for a higher degree called the *licence*. When he attains the grade of *licence*, which is equivalent to our B.A. or M.A., he may become a master in a municipal college. After ten years' experience there, he is eligible for mastership in a lycée.

To become "professor" in a lycée at once, *i.e.*, without serving in a college, a very high degree, the *agrégation*, which is like our double-first honours, must be passed. Even a partial success in the *agrégation* is valuable, just as in this country second-class honours are better than none at all. A partial *agrégé* need serve but *five years* in college, instead of ten exacted from the *licencié*.

It is evident that very great ability and high scholar-

ship are required to become an agrégé, and, as a result, obtain a professorship in a lycée without passing through the college.

The salaries of French masters are not great, but, as they are civil servants, their upward progress (though slow) is sure and practically automatic. At the age of sixty, provided there is thirty years' service behind, the master can retire on a pension, which is not less than half of his salary at the time.

It would be wrong to suppose that there are no flaws in the French system thus sketched. There is, undoubtedly, a good deal of favouritism and underhand political influence in many of the appointments. Nevertheless, the system works, on the whole, very well indeed. Defects are being removed in the light of experience, and the French are not too proud to avail themselves of the lessons to be drawn from other countries.

I am convinced that the French teachers are a highly cultured and splendid body of men. I have come into intimate touch with many of them in my travels, and learned to admire their hard-working life of unostentatious usefulness. Their remuneration, as I said, is not big, but then they are not ambitious, and most of them have some absorbing literary hobby to keep them occupied and cheery in their spare time. Great respect is everywhere accorded in France to specialised scholarship; and among teachers, the quiet, professional bookish life, with a moderate income, is highly esteemed. A great number of the French teachers have sprung from the peasant class, and have, consequently, very simple

tastes. Madame is thrifty; the family is never large; and there is always a slight margin for the luxuries. Being in the employment of the State, the teacher must, of course, show himself to be a good republican: *he must not go to mass too often, or be a regular subscriber to newspapers that are vehemently against the Government.* Most teachers find it quite easy to be complacently anti-clerical.

Boys work hard at the French schools, for they have that terrible baccalaureate (leaving certificate) to face. No boy can begin his studies for any profession, or become a candidate for a government post, unless he has passed his baccalaureate. If he fails to capture the diploma, he must take what energy and intelligence he has into the domain of business, for the university and the civil service have nothing to say to him. I am certain that the British schoolboy has a much freer, healthier, and better time of it than his French coëval. The love of system and minute uniformity, so characteristic of French government, has made even the curriculum of school studies a tiresome, pedantic, and vexatious thing. No teacher may venture to innovate on the official programme; and he is surprised to be told of the liberties enjoyed in the British school. I feel bound to praise very highly one feature of the French system of education, and that is *the great attention and respect accorded to the native language of the pupils.* The French are wise in devoting so much time to the study of their magnificent language, and I wish English were as sedulously cultivated with us.

DISCIPLINARY METHODS.

There is no corporal punishment in the French schools. Offending youths are moralised by being kept in after hours, and being made to copy out lines from authors of an elevating nature. It is supposed that the repeated transcription of edifying maxims will improve the tone of a boy's conscience, and cause him to forsake the error of his ways. The same genial supposition is current in certain educational circles in Great Britain.

A famous Irish ecclesiastic, Father O'Flynn, believed that corporal punishment might be serviceable even in the domain of religion. In the lyric devoted to his memory, he is pictorially represented as "helping the lazy ones on with a stick." King Solomon, whose reflections on life were of no haphazard kind, has added the weight of his authority to the notion that inertia may, in certain cases, be dislodged or, at least, minimised, by the application of physical force. I am not disposed to deny that the rod may have some value as a means of persuasion.

In a class of fifty boys, there are usually twenty, at least, who prefer play to work. Some stern necessity is needed to keep them at their books. Such boys are often enough dowered with a fair amount of intelligence, but the motive to work is lacking. It is needless to tell them how greatly education conduces to success in life: their imagination is too weak to leap far into the future. They must be supplied with an incentive, present tense and potential mood. Detention after hours, and copying out lines, are powerful with some.

I can conceive of cases, however, in which the best interests of education would be served by means of a private interview between the offender and a head master, who is orthodox enough to believe in the doctrine contained in Proverbs xix. 18.

A school is a small community, and contains samples of human nature as diverse as are to be found in the world outside. Neither a school nor a society can be governed solely by sentiment, moral suasion, and appeals to reason, for there are (to speak bluntly), certain "black sheep" who obtrude themselves on our notice and need summary handling. "Order is heaven's first law," is a maxim applicable alike to a school and to a country. In school, discipline must be maintained, and idleness penalised in some effective way. I am certain that the management of British schools, and the education given in them, are superior to anything to be found in France, largely because our headmasters are less hampered by official restrictions, and have far more scope for the exercise of their individuality and their personal judgment.

A STORY FROM M. CLARETIE.

That genial and amusing writer, M. Jules Claretie, gives us in one of his books, a reminiscence that throws light on the character of the French schoolboy. I compress the tale, but omit no essential feature.

"We schoolboys, to the number of 107, were constantly being dosed with lentils, and grew to be heartily sick of them. Day after day, they were served up to us at dinner, till we loathed the very look of them. We

became rebels, and took a solemn oath to make a violent protest against the obnoxious article of diet. One day (the day fixed for the public display of our feelings), when the smoking lentils, swimming in brown sauce, had been, as usual, served out to us, a loud yell of rage issued simultaneously from 107 throats, and every soul of us, lifting his plate, sent the lentils flying and hurtling in all directions through the dining-hall. We all felt, like the revolutionaries of 1789, that we had struck a deadly blow against tyranny. The floor of the refectory was slippery with the relics of our demonstration. We sang a new Marseillaise, and heroically bawled *À bas les lentilles!* The headmaster came rushing to the scene and began parliamenting. 'What's wrong?' he cried. Our reply was, 'No more lentils! Death would be preferable.' His measures were soon taken. A certain number of us were ordered to go and pack our trunks for a journey home. I was one of those who suffered the ignominy of expulsion. My breast glowed with a noble flame as I gathered my belongings together and prepared to leave the school, never to return. My parents were surprised to see me when I arrived home, but, as dinner was on the point of being served, explanations were postponed till the eating was over. Judge of my surprise when I saw on the table *a dish of lentils!* What I had fled from at school awaited me in my father's house."

M. Claretie observes that his schoolboy experience is capable of political extension. Revolutions arise from a distaste of tyranny, and the result is just more tyranny with, perhaps, a change of sauce. He remarks

that it is better to endure the lentils that are put before us, than fly to others that we know not of. His counsel is the counsel of despair, and is inconsistent with English ideals.

COMPARISONS.

If, in an English school of a like kind, there had been such a persistent appearance of lentils on the board, there would have been no explosion or revolution among the scholars. A public meeting would have been held, a chairman appointed, a resolution passed, and a deputation appointed to convey the finding of the meeting to the principal of the school. If investigation showed that the boys had good grounds for their complaint, it is certain that means would have been taken to remove or attenuate the grievance.

M. Claretie mentions that though the whole 107 were guilty of throwing the lentils about the refectory, and uttering rebellious cries, only a few scholars, *chosen at random*, were expelled from the school. This action appears to our insular mind as flagrantly unjust. Some method of punishing all the guilty scholars would certainly have been devised by a British schoolmaster, for that gentleman is usually fertile in expedients and actuated by a genuine love of fair-play. Either none or all of the culprits should have been sent home.

Expulsion from school is so besmirching a penalty that it should not be lightly or unfairly inflicted. If a boy is really guilty of a serious breach of discipline, all the resources of civilisation should be brought into play to amend him. In England, the epidermic argument

is numbered among these resources. It is an argument that sometimes succeeds, and is better, at least, than summary dismissal.

The free expression of opinion, within reasonable limits, is so favourable to just government, and so much in keeping with the character of our constitution, that our schoolmasters and legislators do not frown upon the open discussion of grievances. They do not lose one whit, they rather gain, in their authority, by such an attitude. Those whom they govern are more likely to acquiesce in any punishment that may be inflicted, when it is known that authority is not brutal and arbitrary.*

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* Frenchmen, like Max O'Rell, who have been on the staff of British schools, have much to say in praise of them. This praise is usually qualified by some derogatory remark bearing on the over-importance given to athletics. It is true that the hero of the French is not the athlete, but the scholar.

CHAPTER V.

IN SWITZERLAND AND SAVOY.

Cosmopolitan Geneva—The French of Geneva—On the lake—Churches and sects—In the Aula—Blood, education, and politics.

A delightful old bookman—He eulogises the clergy—His encounter with a spiritualist—He praises Swedenborg—An exciting thought—A cure for pessimism—Unsated Eld—The great Bowman.

Five francs an hour—Hotel guests—Old records of Geneva.

The patriarch of Ferney—Modern eulogists of Geneva—A Frenchman's criticisms—Lausanne—Coppet and the Neckers—On the Salève—Genius and hard work—Visitors to Monnetier—A searcher for wild flowers—A hill farm.

The procession of the Conscripts—A French novelist's indictment of military service.

In a mountain châlet—A Saratoga trunk—Two very austere dames—A literary shoemaker—Peasant women—Picturesque sights—On a high pasture—A mountain gorge—The Swiss dialects—Drawbacks—A mountain priest—A Swiss legend.

COSMOPOLITAN GENEVA.

When I went for the first time to Geneva University, I was amused and delighted at the engaging republican simplicity with which everything was carried on. The registrar was in his office, indeed, but there was no affectation of pomp about him. He took his pipe out of his mouth (he must have been smoking a long time, for the room was blue), and said that, as I was a

foreigner, I could go anywhere I liked in the whole University, and need not bother about formalities. Hospitality could not well extend further. As I was interested in hearing how English Literature is taught abroad, I went regularly during the winter to the lecture-room of Professor Redard, who was giving a series of discourses on the Lake Poets. I was particularly struck with his masterly and sympathetic appreciation of Shelley. I became intimate with Professor Redard, and thought him a good specimen of the frank, genuine, and unostentatious nation to which he belonged. If he saw a British student in his lecture-room, he would have no hesitation in calling upon him by name, to pronounce, *more Britannico*, some of the English proper names that are apt to suffer damage on a Continental tongue, such, for example, as Burns, Leigh Hunt, Campbell, Southey. Besides being an accurate Shakespearean scholar, Professor Redard was intimately acquainted with the developments of modern English Literature, and thought highly of John Davidson and Stephen Phillips. I had many a pleasant talk with him, and liked the merry twinkle in his eye. Through his kindness, I was introduced to some of the other professors, who were, each and all, gluttons of books, and, like the Athenians of old, universal in their interests, and eager to hear something new. Urbane dignity and a certain scholastic simplicity of manner, characterised all these worthy bookmen.*

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* Nothing, to my mind, could be more dignified than the following notice of the professor of mathematics, who died in 1906, at the

Geneva is the most cosmopolitan city in the world. A walk over the long bridge, under which rushes like an arrow, the deep blue current of the Rhone, will cause you, in one half-hour, to hear most of the languages of Europe, as well as the hoarse notes of the gulls that go flapping overhead, and about the arches. In the class-rooms of the University there are shoals of young Russians, both men and women, who, for the most part, look miserably poor, ill-clad, and revolutionary. This exotic tribe—the redundancy of Russia—herd confusedly in the cheap lodgings of the Genevan slums in the upper town, a quarter where there are as many wynds, closes, and ridges of sky-high tenements, as in the old town of Edinburgh. Science and medicine are the subjects these mysterious aliens chiefly take up. Can it be that some of them are zealots of Nihilism? or spies of the Little Father? Terrible desperadoes are believed to hatch their plots in the squalid recesses of Calvin's town. Not so long ago, the Empress of Austria was done to death by a miscreant on one of the quays.

THE FRENCH OF GENEVA.

The French spoken in Geneva is correct and grammatical, but one is at once aware of peculiarities. The

advanced age of ninety: "The long life of M. Gabriel Oltramare was studious and uneventful. He was one of those rare men to whom the problems of higher mathematics are congenial and easy, and who, in that domain of thought, can discover truths that are really new. The success of his researches, and the esteem of those specialists who were competent to judge these at their proper value, were a recompense to him for a life-time of disinterested work."

Parisian vivacity and sparkle are not there. Buy a Swiss newspaper and glance over its contents: you seek in vain for the fine, careless rapture of the Boulevard sheet. There is, instead, a pose, balance, and seriousness, which are excellent in their way, but a trifle heavy. In all Swiss literature that I have seen (including, let me say, the able writings of M. Rod), there is an absence of that irresponsible gaiety which is invariably present in French writings of a lighter cast. Calvinists, as a rule, don't cut capers, either at home with us in Britain, or abroad. The Genevese are no longer Calvinists, but the shadow of the austere reformer still lies over the town. One of the world's most remarkable books of individualism and ruthless introspection (features so characteristic of Protestantism everywhere), was a product of Geneva, *Amiel's Journal.* You are not long in the company of an educated native of Geneva, till he asks you if you have read it. It is certainly a striking and even astounding book, full of rich, melancholy thought. For dipping into now and again, it is excellent. The same may be said of the dry, keen, satirical *Pensées* of M. Roget. Of all Swiss books of personal talk, however, Rousseau's *Confessions* stands first. I used to retire to that quiet island in the Rhone, where Rousseau's handsome statue has been erected among the trees, and read those wonderful chapters in which he applies the pitiless scalpel to his brilliant and demented soul. One reading is enough: nobody wants to read the book twice; nobody needs to read it twice, for its main incidents are unforgettable. Most of us are prone to say, after reading an enjoyable book, "I

should like to have met the author and had a chat with him." Rousseau is the only exception. Most admirers of his book would go a hundred miles out of their way to avoid meeting him or anyone the least like him.* It is to be remembered then, in connection with Geneva, that the natives have not the wit and humour of the French, but are solidly intellectual and powerful in the domain of self-analysis.

ON THE LAKE.

A forenoon spent in rowing on the lake is a very good way to discover flaws in Calvin's doctrine of the Total Depravity of human nature. A complex feeling of goodness, worship, and gratitude, rises up in the mind of the normal man as he skims over that glassy surface, especially if he is himself giving a hand with the oars. It seems rather a curious way to confute a dogma, to go out for a *promenade en bateau*, but the method is worth trying. The great Reformer was *far too much in his study*. If he had lived a more open-air life, he would not, it is true, have had time to write

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* Carlyle, who puts Rousseau among the heroes, says, nevertheless: "His books, like himself, are what I call unhealthy; not the good sort of books. . . . His semi-delirious speculations on the miseries of civilised life, the preferability of the savage to the civilised, and such-like, helped well to produce a whole delirium in France generally. True, you may well ask, What could the world, the governors of the world, do with such a man? Difficult to say what the governors of the world could do with him! What he could do with them is, unhappily, clear enough—*guillotine* a great many of them."

those fifty huge volumes of divinity that stand cobwebbed on the topmost shelves of the libraries, but he might have seen reason to modify somewhat the harshness of his generalisations. Byron never felt so good as when he was out on the lake.

> "Clear, placid Leman! thy contrasted lake,
> With the wild world I dwelt in, is a thing
> Which warns me, with its stillness, to forsake
> Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring."

It was precisely on this lake that an excellent Scotch friend of mine, a visitor, like myself, to Geneva, came pretty near doing violence to his creed. He is, I may say, an admirer of Calvin, and goes about the business of life, weighted with the conviction, for which, indeed, there is no lack of proof, that the devil has too much of his own way in the world. But, as he gazed, from his skiff, at that resplendent Swiss landscape, overflowing with the sunshine of early morn, as he saw the distant mountains standing in majesty against the cloudless blue, and heard the singing of birds in the verdant meadows of the margin, he was overcome by the miscellaneous dazzle of things and said, "What a fine world this must have been *before* it was polluted with sin, *for even as it is, it's simply glorious!*" I was grateful for the admission, qualified though it was, and admired it more than the criticism, recorded by Carlyle, of a Scotch Presbyterian who, viewing Nature's grandeur from the top of Ben Lomond, remarked in ecstasy to his companion, "Man, Geordie, the works o' God are fair deevilish." Pessimism falls away from a man who fre-

quents the sublimities of earth, and the sentiment of worship rises naturally to his lips.

"Not vainly, did the early Persian make
His altar the high places and the peak
Of earth-o'ergazing mountains, and thus take
A fit and unwalled temple, there to seek
The Spirit, in whose honour shrines are weak,
Upreared of human hands. Come! and compare
Columns and idol-dwellings, Goth or Greek,
With Nature's realms of worship, earth and air,
Nor fix on fond abodes to circumscribe thy prayer."

I notice that an English gentleman has recently compiled an anthology of verses from the works of the numerous poets who have visited Switzerland and commemorated its beauties in song. What strikes one most, in looking over the collection, is the number of poems that run into the form of devotion and prayer. Coleridge, for example, calls his poem on Mount Blanc, a *hymn*.

"O dread and silent Mount! I gazed upon thee,
Till thou, still present to the bodily sense,
Did'st vanish from my thought: entranced in prayer,
I worshipped the Invisible alone."

Wordsworth's tour among the Alps led him to say:

"Cliffs, fountains, rivers, seasons, times,
Let all remind the soul of heaven;
Our slack devotion needs them all,
And faith, so oft of sense the thrall,
While she, by aid of nature, climbs,
May hope to be forgiven."

The dogma of the Total Depravity of man, on which Calvin laid such stress, cannot stand uncontradicted in

view of the fact that a beautiful landscape has power to *evoke*, spontaneously, such noble thoughts and such hallowed aspirations. The divinity which is *in* man, is stirred to life when confronted by the divinity in nature. Hence, I say, that the best refutation of Calvin's doctrine is a ramble among the Alps or a boating excursion on the lake.

CHURCHES AND SECTS.

Very varied religious food is supplied to the dwellers of Geneva, as might be expected from the mixed character of the population. There is a Russian Church, strikingly attractive in appearance, both outside and in, and well worthy of a visit. I went there several times, and was impressed as by a dramatic spectacle. The Protestant Cathedral has the effect of an anomaly. A bare service, without candles, flowers, robed acolytes, surpliced priests, gorgeous ritual, and muttered responses, is not pleasing in a cathedral. The pillars and arches of such a place seem to call aloud for perfume, genuflexion, and organ-roll. The most popular place of worship in Geneva is the Victoria Hall, where thousands of people assemble on Sundays to hear just such stirring gospel addresses as one might hear at a Revival meeting in England or Scotland. The speaker who holds forth there is one of the most eloquent "hot gospellers" I have ever listened to.

There is a society of theosophists in Geneva, the leading member of which is a lady—the wife of an eminent Russian diplomatist. There are few handsomer ladies

in Europe than she: once seen, she can never be forgotten, for her eyes burn, glow, and glisten in the most marvellous and uncannily fascinating way. Like all high-born Russians, she has great linguistic powers. A Mr. Leadbeater, an apostle of theosophy, gave a lecture in English on the principles of the cult, during my stay in Geneva. The lecture-room was crowded by an audience of Genevese folk, who followed the speaker with the closest attention. Mr. Leadbeater discoursed with ability and deliberation, and told us all about the doctrine of *karma*. It was not easy, however, to keep from looking, now and then, at the brilliant lady who was in the chair. Her eyes, like search-lights, flashed round the room from time to time, and I must say that the glitter of them was a far more powerful argument for theosophy than anything we heard from the lecturer. I afterwards procured Mr. Leadbeater's address in print, and smoked not a few pipes over it, only to come to the conclusion that the "hot gospeller" furnished a better driving-power for humanity on its upward path.

Catholics and Protestants are about numerically equal in the population of the town. The former were proud of drawing the noted Academician, Brunetière, to give a pro-Catholic lecture on Calvin, in Geneva, some ten years ago. Brunetière's harangue was a great one, marvellously well delivered. It was a trenchant criticism of the ill effects of excessive individualism in the domain of religion, and gave rise to not a little controversy in the newspapers of the town.

IN THE AULA.

A meeting-place that gave me a still higher opinion of the literary tone of Geneva, was the *Aula* of the University, *i.e.*, the great hall, capable of holding thousands of listeners, in which a series of lectures is given every winter to the public, by speakers of note. It was often difficult to get standing room at these lectures, so great was the throng of people that crowded for admission. There would hardly have been such a hustle in an English town to hear a lecture on an abstract theme. The subjects chosen by the orators (for *orators* they were of a very high stamp) were of a literary and philosophical character, and it was very evident that no restraint of any kind was put upon the expression of even the most advanced views. I remember hearing a lecture in this *Aula* on the "History of Morals." The subject has, at first sight, a suggestion of aridity, but the Genevese are not easily scared by titles, and on this occasion the hall was filled to overflowing. In the course of his remarks, the speaker opened a volume of Victor Hugo, and declaimed, with great oratorical force, the famous poem on *Conscience*. The verses deal with Cain and his offspring fleeing into the desert from before the face of the Almighty. The murderer, wherever he looks, beholds a large round eye gazing in anger at him from the heavens. Neither change of scene nor any device of hiding-place, can drive aloof the terrible obsession. At last Cain goes underground, and conceals himself in a pit away from the sunlight, but all to no purpose, for the great, menacing eye glares in on

him there too. Completely demoralised, he exclaims, *Je vois cet œil encore.* The story, which Hugo found, not in the Bible, but in an obscure eastern legend, is in the poet's finest manner, and will stand reading a hundred times. The audience was completely captivated by the sublime and rolling lines. The speaker, who had an excellent manner, a mobile face, and a voice that could send even a whisper to the remotest nook of the gallery, was complimented by a hearty round of applause when he come to the end of the poem. The story of Cain, as Hugo tells it, was eminently appropriate to the orator's subject, for conscience, which is the Eye of God, is the great fact in the history of morals. The lecture contained many other radiant passages, but the illustration from Hugo out-gleamed all the others. I am sure some of us lost sleep that night thinking of Cain.

> "Avec ses enfants vêtus de peaux de bêtes,
> Échevelé, livide au milieu des tempêtes."

I repeat that I am *sure*, for, while walking next day in the Corraterie (which is one of the most animated thoroughfares in Geneva), I met an English student whom I knew, and who, without any preliminaries, addressed me thus:

> "Cachez-moi! cria-t-il; et, le doigt sur la bouche,
> Tous ses fils regardaient trembler l'aïeul farouche,
> Caïn dit à Jabel, père de ceux qui vont
> Sous des tentes de poils dans le désert profond;
> Etends de ce côté la toile de la tente—
> Et l'on développa la muraille flottante;

Et, quand on l'eut fixée avec des poids de plomb :
Vous ne voyez plus rien ? dit Tsilla, l'enfant blond,
La fille de ses fils, douce comme l'aurore,
Et Caïn répondit : Je vois cet œil encore."

"When I went to my lodgings after that lecture," he added, "I took down Hugo and learned off the poem on Cain. The lines have been lilting through my head the whole day. They are in every way exquisite, but I wish I could get rid of them. Every one is a picture that insists on building itself up in my brain. One picture chases the other away, and the whole thing becomes a dazzling and confused panorama. It is strange that a lecture on moral ideas should have upset my tranquillity in such a way."

"Don't speak so loud," I said. "You will gather a crowd, and people will think we are quarrelling. *Similia similibus curantur.* There is a lecture to-night in the Athenæum on Roman excavations at Aventicum. You ought to go and hear it, and Cain will trouble you no more."

BLOOD, EDUCATION, AND POLITICS.

It is somewhat of a surprise to find, on the authority of genealogists, that many of the most important men of genius, who have made Geneva famous, and who are usually regarded as pre-eminent samples of the Genevese spirit, were incomers to the town, or had a large percentage of foreign blood in their veins. The great Calvin himself was a pure Frenchman, a native of Picardy. Beza, his fellow-reformer, was also an entire outsider. These two men came to Geneva in the pleni-

tude of their powers, and impressed their stamp on the place. The *confessionist*, Amiel, and the humorist, Toepffer, were both born in the town, but their parents were foreign. Rousseau, Saussure, and Necker were of mixed, foreign and Genevese, descent. It would not be easy to name many writers of European reputation who are of unadulterated Genevese stock. The typical citizen is a blend of many bloods, and is educated, both by heredity and environment, to understand most people that come into his presence.

The intelligence of the Genevese results from their superb system of education, which is the finest in Europe. They are in a specially good geographical position for learning modern languages; but, leaving nothing to chance, they have systematised the instruction of their schools, till it has become a model for all nations. All over Switzerland, indeed, education is a topic in which the cantons are keenly interested. Small countries, with limited natural resources, do not furnish a wide enough field for their energetic sons, but if these latter set out from home well-educated and intelligent, they will succeed almost anywhere. The Swiss writers on education, Rousseau and Pestalozzi, have been guides to many a generation of teachers, and are as stimulating as ever. As Switzerland never needs to be at war, there is all the more money available for schooling. One often hears it said that *Geneva is a French town that does not wish to be in France.* Why, indeed, should the Genevese wish to form part of France? They are better schooled as they are, and are members of a genuine democratic republic that looks after its poor and needy

with the solicitude of a mother. Further, they have, in addition to their own privileges, many of the privileges enjoyed by the French. A Genevese author speaks to his own city, and to all France as well. When a young Swiss goes to push his fortune in France, he has no initial bother with the language. It is true that Frenchmen go to Switzerland in large numbers, but *not* with the object of making money: they go as holiday-makers, and return home with their pockets empty. There is also much money paid to Switzerland by foreign parents, who send their sons and daughters to be educated there. And nowhere in Europe, let me say, is education so cheap and good as in the towns of Geneva and Lausanne.

It is productive of patriotic feeling for a man to be able to say that his country has contributed to the advancement of civilisation. The Swiss may, with legitimate pride, make such a boast of their little fatherland. They can also say that they have solved many problems of government that larger nations have still to face. Switzerland is a true democracy, in which the power of representative assemblies does not overbear the importance of the individual. The citizens of Switzerland hold such strong views on republicanism, that they sturdily refuse to give a free hand, at any moment, to the representatives they themselves elect. By means of the *Referendum* and the *Initiative*, the voters maintain a constant control over the doings of the Federal Assembly. The basis of voting is extremely simple: members are paid for their services; there is a general election every three years; there is one member

for every 20,000 inhabitants; and every man over twenty years of age has a vote. As regards local government, each commune (and there are 3000 such) is free to do as it likes, in all matters affecting itself. Many quaint old usages have, in consequence, been preserved, especially in the remoter villages. There are few studies more interesting than that of Swiss politics.

A DELIGHTFUL OLD BOOKMAN.

For some months I took a course of French literature in the house of a fine and vigorous old Swiss gentleman, Doctor Thomas Chappuis, who had at one time occupied the Chair of Greek in one of the Swiss colleges. He was pleased to know I was a lover of the Greek poets, and hardly a day passed but he found an excuse, in the middle of our French talk, to roll off a verse or two from some of the tragic choruses. It was a species of vanity that became the old scholar well. English he read, but did not speak; German he both read and spoke, but his pronunciation was tinctured with Swiss pecularities. His French was precise and accurate, and all the French classic writers were familiar to him. The wisdom of studying French under such a man is apparent. He was never at a loss for a subject. As it was mainly practice in French conversation of which I stood in need, a great variety of topics, involving a host of different words and idioms, was desirable. M. Chappuis was always fresh and interesting, there being no subject of history, literature, or science on which he could not say something. His manners were so courtly and deferential as to be, at times, em-

barrassing: when he had to correct what was erroneous, he would do so quite apologetically, and throw the blame on Bossuet, Pascal, and Voltaire, who were "very exacting gentry, but, nevertheless, masters of French speech, and worthy of imitation." One frequent topic of conversation was religion (Calvin's house was not many miles away, nor was the site distant where Servetus was burned for wrong views on the Unknowable). I tried to explain to him, in French, the wondrous developments of Scotch theology since the days of Calvin's pupil, Knox, with passing reference to all the great splits and uproarious schisms, of which Caledonia is so justly proud. At times, my narrative seemed to give him twitches of physical pain, due, I should hope, more to the language than to the contents. He followed what I said quite easily, and alleged, good-humouredly, that he had learned something. I look back with pleasure on his lucid account of cantonal history, full of such civic enterprise and individualistic genius. I shall attempt to give one or two samples of this gentleman's talk, both grave and gay. While he is speaking, it may be well to bear in mind that he might have said, like Allan Ramsay:

> "For tallness I
> Am five feet and four inches high,
> A blackaviced, snod, dapper fallow,
> Not lean, nor overlaid wi' tallow.
> Then for the fabric o' my mind,
> 'Tis mair to mirth than grief inclined."*

* I have for the sake of variety, made an attempt to report the nature of the subjects of conversation in which the various characters were wont to indulge. *The views of men one meets abroad*

HE EULOGISES THE CLERGY.

"Since my earliest years I have had a fondness for the society of ecclesiastics. A clergyman, to my mind, is a living and uniformed protest against every theory that tends to make us think ignobly of ourselves. You need not smile: the tendency of modern times is to make us esteem ourselves too lightly. If we were all thoroughly convinced of our majesty as immortal beings (fated to outlive the sun and stars), our present conduct could not fail to be beneficially affected. I rejoice, therefore, that we have a spiritual aristocracy in our midst, whose duty it is to pull us up sharply when we attend too exclusively to material things. Their task is a tough one, and is yearly becoming more thankless.

"The rôle of religious teacher becomes especially difficult in a period like ours, when every third man in a congregation considers himself a competent critic of doctrine and even elocution. The tendency of modern

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are, at least, as interesting as the scenery. The hills that rise in grandeur round the Lake of Geneva can be seen at any time, and Baedeker tells all about them. The Cathedral of Geneva has been written about so much that hardly anything remains to be told. Yet, so long as the human race, with its infinite permutations and combinations, continues to exist and exhibit so many fresh creations, puzzles, and interesting modes of thought, there is no risk of travel becoming dull. Carlyle has bemoaned the fact that words are so inadequate for picturing external nature: "A forest cannot be explained or described by any artifice of language." But words, though imperfect and inadequate, do really give us a tolerable notion of the speaker's soul at the time. A traveller should always lay stress on the talk of the folk he meets, as in no other way is he likely to be original.

hearers is not so much to receive humbly what is said, as to subject everything from the pulpit to a severe scrutiny. Then again, every congregation contains a percentage of violent specialists, who go home in a huff if their pet views do not get sufficient prominence in the sermon. It never occurs to such men that the Church exists mainly for the purpose of divine worship.

"In spite of all their trials, our ministers perform their duties admirably, and are worthy of our unstinted esteem. They are a highly-cultured body of men, and are perfectly well convinced that such authority as they traditionally have, can (in this era of discussion, restiveness, and revolt), be chiefly maintained by moral earnestness, not by claims of transmitted superiority. People who claim authority are frequently answered by scoffs; those who deserve it have very seldom the need to formulate any claims. The various churches and sects were never more earnest than now in the furtherance of moral aims, and never had more real weight in the realm. Controversy about trifles is gradually being eliminated from their programme, much to the advancement of pure religion and undefiled. And it is only the negligible and less cultured testifiers who believe that the whole of truth has been found out and is the property of one particular denomination."

HIS ENCOUNTER WITH A SPIRITUALIST.

"It is a great mistake to suppose," said the Doctor one morning, "that when a man tells you he has renounced the tenets of orthodox Christianity, he is, therefore, a sceptical, non-credulous, and materialistic

person. Religion, of some kind, is a necessity for man, and religion always contains an element of mystery. The vagaries of the religious sense in some of our non-orthodox friends are nothing less than appalling, and are associated with a belief in miraculous events of a far cruder and tougher kind than anything to be found in the legends of the saints. Now, there is my friend, M. Montyer of Lausanne. He is one of the shrewdest business men I ever met—keen, upright, and urbane. I am certain that if you dealt commercially with him, the quality of his goods and his honourable procedure would be most satisfying. He is a man of wide reading, who can understand almost anything. Action and contemplation are exquisitely blended in his life, and from my own knowledge, I can certify that he does a great amount of good on the quiet. I met him in the train some time ago, and was astounded to hear from his own lips that he had recently become a spiritualist, and that departed souls were practising penmanship with his right hand. 'I have long been aware,' he said, 'that I am possessed of some peculiar psychic gifts denied to the majority of human beings, but my business affairs have been so engrossing that I have had no time to develop these powers to the full. Of late, however, manifestations have been crowding in on me. Almost every morning, before rising, I am treated to the most delicious and ethereal odours, and I have actually seen bouquets of flowers appearing in mid-air and vanishing away.' 'How do you account for all that?' I asked in alarm. 'I can't account for it,' he replied. 'But surely you have a theory. Who brings

you the flowers?' 'I put my case before a medium of note in Paris and was informed that my benefactors were *Allobroges*.' I got such a shock at this unexpected announcement that I rose hastily and opened the windows of the compartment in order to let in some fresh air. 'Allobroges!' I said, 'that's most extraordinary. They were a wild enough crew when they were on this world in the flesh, but now it seems they have taken to floriculture on the astral plane. Really, this is contemptible stuff you've got into your head. It's not a medium you stand in need of. Next time you go to Paris, you ought to consult a specialist in mental hallucinations. The Allobroges will drive you crazy some morning.' 'On the contrary,' he replied, 'they have treated me with great kindness.' 'Did you ever see them?' I asked. 'No, I can't say I have; but I have felt them. More than once they have treated me to levitation, that is to say, they have raised me to the ceiling in my chair, and then gently lowered me to the floor.' I gladly bade him adieu at Lausanne, and did not recover from my discomposure for the rest of the day.

"My talk with him clearly proves to me that the decay of faith means not the growth of reason, but the advance of ugly and grotesque superstition. The legends of the saints are beautiful, and no one can read them without experiencing some genuine moral betterment. But this rubbish of levitation, and talking with the dead by means of table-feet, is unmixedly pernicious. How unsettling, for the necessary business of life, to be lifted about on chairs, for no evident purpose, by a set

of unemployed ghosts! As to the automatic writing of which we hear so much, I must say that I never saw a single phrase of any consequence in all the reams of it that have been published. We have plenty of sorry matter from living scribblers without bringing in competing stuff from beyond the tomb. Clairvoyance, trances, etc., have made small progress in Geneva, but in Paris, as you can see by the advertisement columns in the newspapers, divineresses *pululent* on all the boulevards. The other morning, in one Parisian paper, I counted thirty advertisements of mediums and other ecstatic persons who claim to have supernatural powers, and who promise, in return for cash, to disclose the future, cure diseases, find lost objects of value, and write automatic messages from the world of spirits. Judging by the length and number of these advertisements, occultism must pay very well indeed."

HE PRAISES SWEDENBORG.

"When I was a student," said M. Chappuis to me one day, "I was wont to spend part of my holidays with an uncle of mine, in a rural village near the east end of the lake. I used to be much impressed by the looks and demeanour of an old gentleman who stayed near my uncle's house, and who was of a most retiring disposition. He was a great reader, and many a time I have seen him sitting, spectacled, on an easy chair at his front window, keenly perusing his authors. When he walked abroad, he had always a book of some bulk under his arm, and, in good weather, he would sit down on a wall or a bench, and try to improve his mind.

Did I say *improve his mind?* The expression is, perhaps, too hasty. The neighbours believed that he kept continually poisoning his mind with nefarious literature. I asked my uncle one day to tell me what the old man's *views of things* might be. The reply did not partake of the language of eulogy: 'I am not exactly sure,' said my uncle, 'what he believes or does not believe; but, judging by the wandered look of him and the enormous size of the books he works at, I am inclined to think he must be a Swedenborgian or some madness of that sort.' The reply did not prejudice me against the quiet old student, and when I became older, I used to have an occasional talk with him. My uncle's suspicions were only too well founded: our neighbour was indeed, and in truth, a disciple of the renowned Scandinavian dreamer, and, being well in funds, he had purchased, and bound in calf, all the visions (and there are not a few) in which the tenets of Swedenborg are, if I may say so, summarily comprehended. I came to love the old man for his amiability and his bravery in grappling with apocalypses. If I had given him the slightest encouragement, he would have left me his library when he died; but I did not feel worthy of the boon, so the books went to the hammer and fetched next to nothing. *I place Swedenborg high up among the saints.* He was, indeed, not merely a saint, but a philosopher as truly as ever Plato was. With his great gifts of seeing beyond the outward show of matter, Swedenborg is far *too good for this generation.* Do not tell me that the man was out of his senses. Those dreams of his hold too well together to be the product of a disordered fancy.

I am sure he saw all he says he did. But I wish he had used less ink."

AN EXCITING THOUGHT.

"A curious thought came into my mind as I was reading a letter of Pliny's last night. You know the passage in which that elegant writer tells of his uncle's death, brought about by scientific curiosity, during the eruption of Vesuvius, in A.D. 79. Pompeii and Herculaneum were overwhelmed, and lay below the débris, undisturbed, for many a century. In modern times, Pompeii has been freed, in great part, from the superincumbent rind of lava and ashes, and lo! the daily life of the first century is vividly revealed to our astonished eyes. The ghost of the old town has burst its cerements, and mutely unveiled many a secret, good and bad. Former notions respecting Roman life have had to be greatly modified, in view of the disclosures brought about by pick and spade. But the other town still remains to be explored, and it is believed, on good authority, to be far more worth exploring. To what shall I compare Pompeii and Herculaneum? I shall compare them to pleasure and work respectively, for the first town was a summer resort, the latter, one of ordinary traffic and life. But our busy towns are full of books and libraries, and so, in all likelihood, was Herculaneum. Some day the books of that old buried town will be got at. Are you not excited at the prospect, my friend? Only think of the wealth of manuscripts that may be brought to light. New gospels, perhaps, may be unearthed, new details of

Christ and his disciples, new particulars that may marvellously modify our current notions. What would be the effect on us (thought I) of some discovery that would relegate things dear to us to the region of doubt? We must have a religion that is independent of all material discoveries, and that shudders not at the prospect of investigation—antiquarian, philological, or scientific. After some reflection, I concluded that a Christian might face the future unappalled, if he held fast to the revelation of the Divine Man: *that* (said I) can never be obsolete, and all the lost MSS. of antiquity cannot mar or overbear the message of that perfect life. A Christian is a believer in Christ; no other creed is required. *Christ-ianity can never be found wrong.*"

A CURE FOR PESSIMISM.

"There are times when *I myself* get up in the morning without a single pleasant idea in my head, and feel overcome with pessimistic thought and a sense of the extreme shakiness of man's earthly lot. On such days, as a rule, everything goes awry, if I do not immediately get out into the open air and seek salvation there.

"Yesterday morning, I knew there was something wrong whenever I awoke, for my mind began philosophising in a very uncomfortable way, speaking thus to me: 'Well, here you are again beginning another day, and much good may it do you! Who are you? What were you before you were born? Where are you going? What will you be? You have no clear light for your feet. Creature of a day, you wander about at random in the world, on the slight and slipping isthmus

that separates time and eternity. O phantom, blended of clay and soul, you gain none of the things you desire, not even in your dreams. You will continue to tread this muddy ball of the earth for some years more, perhaps, and then drop into deserved oblivion. It is possible, indeed, that this very day may be your last.'

"Feeling that immediate action was necessary, I leapt to my feet without more ado, made a hasty toilet, ate a slice of bread, gulped a large cup of coffee, enveloped myself in a waterproof, pulled a cap over my brows, and, with a stout stick in my hand, bounded out into the open. It was half-past seven in the morning, the sky was overcast with big banks of heavy cloud, and the rain was remorselessly descending in slanting sheets. With bent head I butted the downpour, and walked on for an hour, grim and resolute. By that time I became aware that the rain was relaxing into a drizzle, and that the sun was scattering the big clouds with a broad, triumphant blaze. I leaned against a tree and beheld a complete and vivid rainbow span the hills: all the colours were there—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet. 'Good,' said I, 'I accept the omen.' At the same moment, God, for my comfort, sent a singing lark to perform graceful gyres over the moist-gleaming meadows around me. Patches of azure above completed the rout of my pessimism. I at once began to think that, really and truly, idealism might be a practical creed. It was in sunshine that I now walked on, rejoicing in my strength and recovered spirits. In another hour I had walked myself dry; but not till five hours had passed did I return home, a happy and opti-

mistic man, with a keen appetite for lunch. Believe me, man is in his proper place in this world, and Nature alone knows the secret for curing his distresses. It is, indeed, more by frequenting Nature than by reading books of theology, that a man will discover that his life is the breath of God and his soul a spark of the divine light. There is a fine rapture in Wordsworth's assertion that 'one impulse from the vernal wood' taught him more than all the sages could. Such tuition, moreover, is cheap." *

UNSATED ELD.

Dr. Chappuis told me a story one day of an old Lausanne lady of eighty-five, which I consider well worth chronicling. "She was an excellent specimen of the Swiss dame, shrewd, kindly, and gifted with a graphic tongue. To see her, in old age, sitting, with her glasses on, in an easy chair by the fireside, reading a big-print Ostervald Bible, was a sight never to be forgotten. She was somewhat deaf, and, as she read, her lips moved continuously to the words. Although she was old and frail, the world was full of interest for her, and she was in no hurry to go. Her death was a slow and quiet extinction of the bodily powers, the mind remaining active to the last. On the day she

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* I ought to say that it was from M. Legouis that my old friend quoted :

"Sur le mal, sur le bien, sur l'homme,
Un frisson des bois au printemps ;
Nous en apprend plus long, en somme,
Que les sages de tous les temps."

died, two of her sons were sitting at the foot of her bed, speaking to each other in whispers, for the old lady seemed asleep. All of a sudden she opened her eyes, and said in clear tones: 'What are you two boys talking about?' One of them gently replied: 'Oh, nothing that would interest you, mother.' This did not please the old invalid at all. Collecting her feeble strength for a last effort, she sat up in bed and called aloud: 'Nothing that would interest *me*? What do you mean? *Everything on earth interests me.*' These were her last words, and she passed away as she uttered them. I prefer that dying remark to some of the final speeches that are recorded of saints and martyrs. It is most inspiring, no doubt, to hear of emaciated saints lying on the couch of death, comforting their weeping friends with hallowed words and transfigured with the glow of heaven. But here was an old lady who, after eighty-five years of noble and strenuous earthly labour, was sublimely interested to the end in the things of the world. It is preposterous to maintain that a mind so alert, would be completely snuffed out when the heart had ceased to beat.

"The stock example of unsated eld is Cato, who, so far from allowing himself to drop into a condition of sleep and inactivity, commenced to study Greek at the age of eighty. Greek was easier to learn then than now, for there were fewer grammars to retard advancement, and tuition would be given on conversational lines. I admire Cato's way of preparing for Eternity, by keeping the edge of his mind bright and keen. His learning of a modern language (for such Greek was

in his day) is specially interesting, as it shows an *advance* in mental outlook, all his previous life having been a protest against Greek influence on Roman society. The men most to be pitied in this world are those who have allowed themselves to stagnate in *ennui*. It takes some hardihood to predict immortality in another world for any man who has become bored with mortal life in this. Who, at least, would not prefer a kindly annihilation to an eternity of boredom?"

HE DISCUSSES THE GREAT BOWMAN.

"It is certainly a most marvellous fact that the things *which never happened*, have, in this world, as much, or even more, influence on history and men's lives, than the things which really did happen. The early history of Rome, for example, which is full of the most absurd and childish legends, had no small effect in fostering the pride of the national character, besides being a never-failing stimulus to the poets and orators. William Tell, in Switzerland, has done an immense amount of good to generation after generation, and yet (let me whisper it gently in your ear), William is a very doubtful and shadowy person. Listen to this sermon which was preached here, in Saint Peter's Cathedral, so recently as Sunday, 2nd August, 1891. Do not run away in a hurry; I shall not read the whole sermon, eloquent as I consider it to be. 'Ah,' said the preacher, 'we love to contemplate him still, enveloped in the gleaming splendour of our old traditions, that imperishable type of a national deliverer, that William Tell, who, rather than bend his head in obeisance before the

tyrant, consented, after a prayer to God, to pierce an apple placed on the head of his boy, reserving, meanwhile, a second arrow in his doublet for the destruction of the despot. But right and sure the hero aimed! He saved his son! He saved his country! Therein we see the undying picture of what these proud old Forest Cantons accomplished. Yes, when they proclaimed, in the face of violent and brute force, the immortal principles on which all true democracy is stablished, *they too* aimed right and sure; *they saved their sons; they created Switzerland.* Thanks to those principles, this Switzerland of ours has grown firm and strong, and our cantons, though diverse in origin, speech, and education, look upon themselves as a nation of brothers. It is owing to these principles that our little Confederation bulks so largely in the history of Europe and of humanity, and that it has always been a refuge and retreat for martyrs in every sacred cause.' Do not these words remind you of the enthusiastic way in which Horace speaks of the Roman hero, Regulus? Now, I am convinced that neither Regulus nor Tell will stand very strict investigation. You will search in vain in the annals of Austria for any governor of the name of Gessler. The apple story is quite a common folk-tale in the mythology of the German nations. A tale, remarkably similar in most points to the one told of Tell, is to be found in the legend of the Danish archer, Toko. But what matters it whether Tell is a truth or a fiction? To Switzerland he is more than a truth: he is an ever-present inspiration. History, with its cold, prying eye, cuts a very poor figure beside the sparkling inventions

of mythology. Anyone who has lived in this republic and noted the excellent effects on the people of the tales associated with the Great Bowman, would be an ungrateful varlet if he uttered his scepticism aloud in the streets. As a private individual he can think what he likes; but when he leaves his study and comes out into the open air, he is bound to be a believer. Tell has a good deal of work before him yet, and, with the aid of Schiller, who has supplied him with winged words, he will in course of time aid in the great international work of freedom, peace, and good-will. So brilliant is the work Tell has already accomplished, that it would be somewhat of a blow to the cause of democracy if the Swiss schoolmasters became such pedants as to throw discredit on the Apple. Most people have neither the time nor the inclination, nor the ability, to enquire into the credentials of such stories as those of Tell, so far as these repose on history. When it is so difficult, as we see by the records of a Court of Justice, for even a trained investigator to find out the accurate details of something that happened last week in the next street, how can we hope to know for certain that a particular event happened in a common near Altorf, six centuries ago, especially as the first record of the alleged event was not written down till one hundred and seventy years had elapsed? The important points to consider are—the ethical beauty and political grandeur of the story. These latter are always useful, and may be appropriately conveyed in the form of myth. Goethe showed great impatience when he heard that a German historian had proved Lucretia to be a fiction: 'What

use have we,' said Goethe, 'for so *pitiful a truth?* As the Romans were great enough to invent such things, we ought surely to be great enough to believe them.' Even when we cease to believe *historically* in a legend, we can still believe in it *ethically* and *poetically*. The latter mode of belief is the more fruitful."

FIVE FRANCS AN HOUR.

Joseph Moulin was at one time in holy orders, but had been unfrocked for his great thirst. He was a clever, unscrupulous rogue, who nevertheless inspired initial confidence in those who met him, by the priest-like air he had on his face and a set pathetic smile, suggestive of piety and peace. His hair was glossy, long, and curled; his talk florid and poetical; and after praising your French accent, he would ask pretty pointedly for the loan of a franc or two. He made a precarious living by teaching French in the town of Geneva to English visitors, whom he fleeced atrociously. All these facts I gathered from one of his victims whom I met in the Hôtel Métropole of that town. This gentleman, Mr. Parker by name, had inserted an advertisement for a tutor in one of the Swiss papers, and Moulin replied to it. It was agreed that Moulin should come to the hotel daily and give Parker tuition at the rate of five francs an hour. Parker was charmed with the gestures, demeanour, and rich conversation of the ex-priest, who dozed him with irregular verbs and anomalous substantives in grand style, and managed, in quite a saintly way, to slip in suggestions of great personal poverty and untoward fates. When at the end

of a month Parker asked his bill, he received an unexpected shock. The hypocritical rogue charged *three* hours' price for each hour's teaching, declaring that it took him an hour to come to the hotel and another hour to walk back home: 15 francs daily, multiplied by 6 for the week, and the product quadrupled for the month, came to 360 francs. As Moulin's residence was at no great distance from the hotel, it can be seen that he was a leisurely walker and probably took the streets where cafés were most numerous. Parker's French was not very idiomatic, but he had quite enough of it to inform Moulin that he would not pay him a *sou*, and that if he did not instantly leave by the door he would be thrown out by the window. Moulin left after sketching many mute gestures of horrified and martyr-like resignation. Parker walked over the Rhone to have a chat with the British Consul on the matter, hoping in his fury that the Foreign Office in London might intervene. He did not see H.M.'s representative, but he saw a junior clerk, who, on hearing the story, had to retire behind a draught-screen to laugh. On recovering from his indelicate mirth, the clerk, in the indirect language of diplomacy, hinted that Parker was a fool and would require to pay up. "You should have made terms in writing with your tutor. You are a foreigner and he is a native; his word will be taken before yours." On returning disconsolate to his hotel, Parker found Moulin and a bailiff (*huissier*) awaiting him. The bailiff's business was to impound Parker's trunks and hat-boxes if the owner did not pay his debt. Parker paid the 360 francs silently, but, as he told me

afterwards, he would willingly have made it 3,600 francs if he could have had one deliberate and whole-souled kick at the retreating tutor.

HOTEL GUESTS.

There was a quaint old French lady in the hotel I stayed in, a fussy, fluttering creature, who must speak or she would die. In the drawing-room she directed attention to herself instantly by her manner and her enormous power over the French language. There was no reticence whatever about her. You were not long near her till you knew that her name was Madame Jeudi, that she was a widow, and that her daughter was a famous singer of European renown. Madame followed her daughter about from town to town, but the cantatrice was frivolous, cruel, and neglectful of the old lady. Hence the tears that Madame shed, the chagrins and *idées noires* with which she was obsessed. The flexibility of her nature was well seen, however, by the sudden way in which she could pull up and heroically give grief a fright. (France! there are few of your children that cannot take the tone of the company they are in.) She was at one time an actress and operatic singer, and used to take the part of "Chimène" in Corneille's well-known play of the *Cid*. In the drawing-room of the hotel, one evening, I heard her declaim one or two of the gorgeous monologues of that immortal drama. It was droll to see the wrinkled little woman glare, and throw her arms about, and imitate the manners and speech of a fiery Spanish warrior. It is but justice to say that she rendered the speeches in an elocution that was admirable.

The company applauded her warmly, and she was greatly elated. One of the guests whispered to me, as he applauded, "You see there the ruins of an actress." I may add that Madame Jeudi was, for a time, established in London as a teacher of music and French elocution, and gave many brilliant entertainments in the drawing-rooms of the rich.

The renowned actor, M. Coquelin, *aîné*, paid a visit to Geneva during my stay, and completely electrified the Genevese by his exquisite interpretations of French comedy. He could do what he liked, that man, with his voice and his face. I have a grievance against M. Coquelin in that he made me lose a night's sleep. He occupied the bedroom next to mine, and on coming home from the theatre, long after midnight, he brought some friends with him, and they had an uproarious and long-continued collation, interspersed with healths and elocution. I was pleased to note that all the waiters and servants of the hotel regarded him with deference, and felt flattered by any recognition from him. He amused others; himself he could not amuse. Being advised by the doctor, in a nervous breakdown, to give up wine, he did so, and told one of his friends the régime he was pursuing. "You do well," said his friend, "to drink cold water only; in that way you will drown your *idées noires*." "Alas!" said Coquelin, "*elles savent nager*."

There was a conscientious American in this hotel, who always strove to prepare himself for a locality by reading up its associated literature. Thoroughly to do this for Geneva, means a deal of trouble. He devoted part of

his time to the study of Browning's *La Saisiaz*, a profound and brilliant work, suggested to the poet by an event that happened at a villa near Geneva, in the year 1877. The American did not find *La Saisiaz* easy reading: nobody ever did. But he persevered nobly, and it was a treat to hear him read, with supercilious wonder and humorous obstinacy, the following allusive passage, which, I may say, sounded very droll when delivered with a nasal twang.

"That which flits and spits, the aspic—sparkles in and out the boughs
Now, and now condensed, the python, coiling round and round allows
Scarce the bole its due effulgence, dulled by flake on flake of Wit—
Laughter so bejewls learning—what but Ferney nourished it?
Nay nor fear—since every resin feeds the flame—that I dispense
With yon Bossex terebinth-tree's, all-explosive Eloquence:
No, be sure! nor, any more than thy resplendency, Jean-Jacques,
Dare I want thine, Diodati! What though monkeys and macaques
Gibber 'Byron'? Byron's ivy rears a branch beyond the crew,
Green for ever, no deciduous trash macaques and monkeys chew."

The foregoing is not easy, but the American's sense of duty kept him at it till he thought he understood it. It is so rare to find tourists systematically associating literature and geography, that I could not refrain from heartily congratulating him on his practice. Not but what there are disappointments sometimes to the hero-worshipper, as Tartarin discovered when, on going to the Castle of Chillon, he unexpectedly found himself seized and locked up in Bonivard's cell! "I have never been treated so badly as that," he said, "but not long ago I had an unfortunate experience in the town

of Chartres. You are aware, of course, that we Americans are rather proud of James Russell Lowell. James R. had a very adroit genius. In 1870, he paid a visit to Chartres, had a good dinner *in a pea-green hotel* there, and went, thereafter, to visit the Cathedral. On this Cathedral he wrote a poem of great merit, which gave the town and the hotel a notable reputation. It is in keeping with the commercial spirit of the present day that *pea-green hotels* have multiplied in Chartres, and that each of them declares itself to be the only genuine one, and all the others spurious. Is not this a tribute to the power of genius? When I landed at Chartres, I was directed to a hotel that was genuine enough in respect of colour, but in every other respect deplorably bad. For the sake of Lowell, I was willing to endure much, and I arranged to stay over-night. After a wretched dinner, I dipped into the poem, and was fairly successful in working up a feeling of æsthetic enjoyment. I desired to have the satisfaction of being able to say to my friends at home that I had read Lowell's poem *within the very walls of the hotel of which he makes mention.* But, alas! I was magisterially interrupted in my reading by violent internal spasms in the region of the stomach. To use the picturesque language of your national bard, Burns (whom I studied at Alloway some months ago), I was suddenly gripped by a *curmurrin'*, or rumbling anguish, that was quite overmastering. The dinner, not the poem, was to blame. The national beverage of Scotland, so useful in such a moving crisis, not being available, I had recourse to the inferior succour of cognac. I regret to say that I spent

a restless night, full of groans, pains, and imprecations. Next morning, weak and limp, I left the town without even going to the Cathedral. I have not had the courage to open Lowell since. Needless to say, pea-green is a tint that I specially abhor. Why could not Lowell have given specific indications as to the whereabouts of the hotel? It is mean to say 'find out such-and-such a place for yourself, and expect to be happy when you get there.' I hope the villa of *La Saisiaz* will be easier to discover."

OLD RECORDS OF GENEVA.

The Scotch tourist who travels in Switzerland, and who takes the trouble (always well repaid) of interesting himself in the social life of the brave little republic, is conscious, at times, of curious similarities between his native land and the one he is visiting. Both countries are a delight to the eye with their romantic valleys, towering mountains, and expansive lakes. The Swiss, like the Scots, are well-educated, intellectual, and "raither fond o' the siller, forbye." Though small in numbers, the population of both lands is decidedly cosmopolitan in outlook, an attitude which is found to be quite compatible with great patriotic intensity. Most remarkable of all, the Swiss are Presbyterian in religion. The "elder at the plate" is often erroneously regarded as something exclusively Caledonian: that august personage is to be found flourishing by the bonnie, bonnie banks of Lake Leman, as well as by the bonnie, bonnie banks of Loch Lomond. When the traveller has spent twelve weary hours in a train that

speeds through the Catholic provinces of France, he finds himself in a land where there are, as in Scotland, presbyteries, elders, kirk-sessions, and all the other familiar and revered adjuncts of Caledonian ecclesiasticism.

The democratic religion, which Knox, the most strenuous of Calvin's disciples, aided so conspicuously in setting up throughout Scotland, presumed to regulate the life and demeanour of its adherents in a very intimate and thorough-going fashion. We know, from our social history, how sternly, in olden days, the Scotch clergy reprimanded laxity of moral behaviour, and how, with the aid of their elders and sessions, they rather vexatiously extended their functions till these included much that is now left to the cognisance of the minor and major courts of law. Indeed, the civil magistrates were sometimes regarded as mere auxiliaries for upholding the powers of the Church. The Scotch system of Presbyterianism was an accurate copy of the ecclesiastical rule which the great Calvin instituted in his Genevan state.

Materials for comparing the methods adopted by the Swiss Reformers with those practised here, are to be found in many large volumes of an antiquarian and historical character, issued by the various learned bodies of the Republic. Such volumes are, of course, largely based on extracts from the archives of the Genevan Council of State, and from the registers of the Presbyterian Consistory. I propose to give the substance of a few of these extracts, with the object of showing to what extraordinary and amusing lengths grandmotherly

legislation may be carried in a small community, dominated by earnest, God-fearing, but narrow-minded ecclesiastics.

One extract deals with the case of a young lady who desired leave to symbolise her grief for her dead father by the erection of a tomb-stone to his memory. With a kind of grudge, the authorities expressed approval of paying mourning duties to a father. "*You may erect a stone*," they said, "*but it must on no account be ostentatious*." On another occasion, a member of the Consistory was very sharply pulled up for allowing his wife to wear an expensive cloak with open sleeves. In a contrite reply, he assured his venerable colleagues that though the cloak *had* open sleeves, he could bring forward evidence to prove that she was, in other respects, *very* substantially attired. We are not informed whether the reverend fathers were satisfied with the verbal assurance. In 1683, fans were forbidden in church, in order to avoid scandal. In 1689, the clergy were officially instructed to denounce from the pulpit all women who persisted in wearing high bonnets. The Consistory considered it utterly at variance, alike with the principles of Christianity and a Republican Government, that ladies, both youthful and mature, should come to church, gleaming with gauze and rustling with lace, and sit down in the pews under head-gear of vast dimensions, more like a lot of towered Cybeles, than a band of prayerful communicants. In the same year, two deputies brought forward a motion to prohibit card-playing within the walls of Geneva: it appears that the pestilent practice had become so common that

even ministers of the gospel looked upon it with a tolerant eye, and would actually steal a quiet rubber themselves occasionally. About the same time, the presence of a foreign dancing-master gave the authorities profound cause for alarm. They had submitted to his presence on the distinct understanding that he should confine his attention to foreign residents, and not teach his antics to the Genevese; but there was a suspicion that he had over-stepped his licence. "Considering," they said, "that we live in perilous times, when it is seasonable to humble ourselves before Heaven, we ought not to endure a dancer in our midst, seeing that, by his presence, our youth may become corrupt, and evils arise by which Supreme Goodness may be grievously offended."

These records show that very little tolerance was shown to Catholics or to Catholic practices. Nearly a century and a half elapsed after the Reformation before a Catholic service was allowed in the town, and even then the Pope's adherents had to worship in a private house, and none but resident foreigners were permitted to attend. In 1684, a citizen was brought up before the Council on the heinous charge of keeping a domestic who was a Papist. He was fined thirty florins, and ordered to dismiss her within a week. A few years previously there had been some talk of celebrating Christmas, but the Council scornfully rejected the proposal, alleging, what, indeed, was quite true (1) that Genevan usage was against it; and (2) that no human being, Catholic or Protestant, could determine, with certainty, the exact day and month for such a festival.

The first day of the week has always been specially revered in Protestant countries, and Geneva was no exception. Surgeons, who, in olden times, not only "let blood," but also performed functions that are now allocated to the barber, were prohibited from cutting the hair or trimming the beard of any person, native or alien, on the Sabbath day. But the community had its Sabbath-breakers too. Under 1643, we have the following entry: "The reverend Consistory complains to the Council that certain citizens, instead of keeping the fourth commandment, flock in large numbers to Voirons to see the ceremonies at the Hermitage there. They even give money to the monks, and these latter boast that Geneva is doing them a deal of service, and helping them to build their monastery." The following excerpt, from the minutes of the Consistory, shows how easily even Sabbatarians may fall into the toils of Satan during the holiday season. "A letter was read from the pastor of Rolle, in which he complains that parties of Genevese, who go to Rolle to drink the waters, have caused a scandal by neglecting to come to church, and by playing all sorts of games, not only on week-days, but on Sabbaths also. This year, he does not openly give their names, but next year, he will consider it his duty to bring ecclesiastical law to bear upon those who give such gross offence to Christian people." The worthy pastor of Rolle felt as some of our Highland ministers do, when the Glasgow trippers flock to the isles and glens in July and August. Unfortunately, ecclesiastical law has little terror for the modern tourist.

In 1737, luckless Allan Ramsay was prohibited from setting up a public theatre in the capital of Scotland. In 1748, the Genevese authorities prohibited even the private acting of the great Christian play of *Polyeucte*: "Professor Maurice admits that he is responsible for the acting of a tragedy (Polyeucte) in the house of a private citizen. Although everything was conducted in good order, without any imposture as to the sex of those acting—the parts having all been taken by young women—we judge it necessary, in the interests of public morality, to prohibit such a species of amusement. Ministers of religion are hereby empowered to notify to all concerned that play-acting is forbidden, and that all citizens must abstain from it in future."

In view of the frequent complaints one hears and reads regarding the lavish expenditure (gaspillage) of public money in the conduct of modern Genevese affairs, I cannot refrain from giving one more extract, in order to show what wise principles of economy actuated the Councillors of the seventeenth century. Hearing that Louis XIV. and his queen were to visit Dijon, they determined to send a deputation thither, and, after some deliberation, it was agreed that the delegates should take with them *four trout*, two for the king and two for the queen. The Bourbons, we know, were great eaters, and no doubt the Genevese Councillors expected to reach the heart of Louis by way of his stomach. One can only hope that the delegates and their trout were not delayed on the journey, for, even when sent by rail in modern times, fish are invoiced as *perishable*.

THE PATRIARCH OF FERNEY.

The literary associations of Geneva are of the most rich and ample kind, and have given birth to more than one thick volume of erudition. Three men stand out pre-eminently among the authors connected with the town, Calvin, Rousseau, and Voltaire, all geniuses of world-wide celebrity and influence. The *Institutes* of the first-named had an influence on British theology which it would be difficult to exaggerate: the book is not much read in these degenerate days, but many of us know its leading doctrines from the excellent and well-expressed summaries in the *Shorter Catechism* of the Westminster Divines. The great critic Brunetière is not in love with *any* of the three writers I have named, but his worst words are reserved for Rousseau and Voltaire. "They are two shabby fellows," he declares. "When I think of the one I always prefer the other. Voltaire was more perverse, Rousseau was more suspicious; the former was more touchy, the latter more dangerous; scurrility was at the bottom of the character of the one, and was even a part of his genius; the other was never better inspired than by defiance, envy, or hatred; and though nobody could safely be the enemy of Voltaire, that was almost better than being the friend of Rousseau."

I think few will deny that Voltaire is the most typical author that France has up till now produced. Those features, good and less good, that are found over the whole area of French literature, are present in concentrated form in his books. Voltaire's prose, it seems to

me, is nearer perfection than that of any other writer of modern times. *Let no lover of books neglect to visit Ferney*, if the opportunity presents itself, and let him muse there for an hour or two on the career and achievements of one of the most versatile and witty of men.

Voltaire's biography makes as good and varied reading as any novel in a circulating library, for his experiences in life were often pretty sensational. In early manhood, his satirical talents got him into trouble with some of the gilded gentry of Paris, and, after some time of compulsory reflection in the Bastille, he was allowed his liberty on condition that he quitted the country. As it happened, he left his country, not so much for his country's good as his own, his enforced exile being a valuable education to him. He came over to England (the refuge of many a distressed foreigner), and was intensely surprised at the freedom of speech that was universally permitted on our side of the Channel. This tolerance was something to which France, under the crumbling and tyrannical régime of the Bourbons, could furnish no parallel. Voltaire was delighted, and set about the study of our institutions and our literature with great ardour. In a series of letters, written to describe his experiences and impressions, he eulogised England so heartily, and upheld Newton and Locke as so much superior to Descartes, that the book gave great offence to the French authorities, and was ordered to be publicly burned by the common hangman. This contemptuous way of reviewing his book indicated pretty clearly that Paris would not be a comfortable place of residence for

the author. He took refuge in the house of Madame du Châtelet, away towards the eastern frontier, in the province of Lorraine. He lived fourteen years (1735-49) with this lady—whose name will always be honourably associated with his—and on her death he committed the folly of accepting an invitation from Frederick the Great to go and stay in Berlin. Harmony did not long reign between Voltaire and Frederick. The soldier and the satirist were exquisitely suited for teasing one another. Frederick, not content with renown in statecraft, desired (such droll ambitions make up great part of life's comedy) to become famous as a writer of French poetry. Voltaire's duty was to correct the Prussian king's bad prosody. The story of their quarrel is one of the most diverting incidents in history. In 1758, Voltaire ceased his wanderings and *settled near the gates of Geneva.* For the last twenty years of his life he reigned as the literary sovereign of Europe. Age did not in the least wither his faculties. When he settled at Ferney, which is about four miles from Geneva, there were only fifty inhabitants; at his death the population was 1,200. Like the old type of Scotch laird, who combined love of letters with keen business instincts, he established regular markets in Ferney for the exchange of produce, and pushed forward every scheme that was likely to improve the social well-being of the villagers. His electric energy discharged itself in many different directions. He took an interest in flocks, herds, and ploughs; he founded a workshop for the manufacture of watches, and tried to persuade the Empress Catherine of Russia to buy them for her Cossacks and civilise these

ardent warriors by teaching them the time of day; he built a theatre to have his own plays represented; and he used to go to mass, like a respectable Christian, escorted by two servants carrying muskets. He was proud of being called the *patriarch of Ferney*, and of being able to show to the pilgrims, who flocked thither from all parts of Europe, that his little domain was the abode of peace and prosperity. I am sorry he did not die at Ferney. Vanity took him to Paris in his eighty-fourth year. The frail little old man was received there with such an outburst of enthusiasm that the excitement killed him. His last message was: *I die adoring God, loving my friends, not hating my enemies, and detesting superstition.* Few men have thrown so much work into the compass of a life-time.

This renowned writer was never tired throwing ridicule on certain forms of ecclesiasticism, but he was not, as is vulgarly supposed, an unbeliever. He was a deist, and declared that if God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him. (When you alight at Ferney out of the Geneva tram, you behold a neat little church there bearing the words, *Deo erexit Voltaire.*) His views do not materially differ from those of some modern sects of Protestants. In our day he might be called a Higher Critic. No one now denies that there were gross abuses in the Church of his time. It is quite easy to make a formidable indictment, including corruption, cruel wars, horrid prosecution, and grovelling superstition, against the Church and its ministers. Voltaire saw that all enthusiasts acted savagely in the repression of what they called heresy. It seemed to him that certain of

the doctrinal points, about which such an amount of ink, blood, and breath were expended, were of little or no importance to sane men who wished to live a moral life. In Spain, the Inquisition had lighted fires to destroy those who held mistaken beliefs; in Russia, people were imprisoned and tortured for making the sign of the Cross with three fingers instead of two; in Geneva, Calvin sent Servetus to the stake for bad views on Metaphysics. Such acts made Voltaire's blood boil. What he advocated, and what he was right in advocating, was toleration, such toleration as he had seen during his stay in England. I cannot admire some of his extravagant attacks, the manner and truculence and indelicacy of his language; but his motives were admirable, and Europe is to-day reaping advantage from his teaching. His views are beautifully expressed in one of his short poems, which I venture to paraphrase: "During our short life-time, with its pains and troubles, let us, since we are children of one and the same God, live, at least, like brothers. Let us help to bear one another's burdens. We are all marching on, bent under the load of our tribulations. A thousand cruel foes beset our life—that life we are always maligning, yet which we cherish so dearly. Sometimes in the course of our days of grief, we wipe away our tears with the hand of pleasure. But pleasure takes wing, and passes away like a shadow. Our pangs, our regrets, our scourges are past numbering. With no guide or stay, our wandering heart is consumed with desire or chilled with monotony. No one of us passes through life without the acquaintance of tears. The helpful charms of society console

our sorrows, at least, for a few moments, but the antidote is too weak for ills that never cease. Ah! do not poison the happiness that may be ours. Men seem to me like prisoners in their cells who have power to help each other, but who fight with the very chains that fetter their hands." The foregoing, though decidedly pessimistic, is by no means an ignoble creed.

No notice of Voltaire, however brief, can omit reference to his audacious championship of the innocent, and his denunciation of the crying abuses of the French law-courts. A report reached Ferney to the effect that a poor fellow, named Calas, had been sentenced to death at Toulouse, on the charge of having murdered his son. Voltaire went into the case thoroughly and discovered that the man was entirely innocent, and had, in fact, been the victim of sectarian persecution under the guise of law. He worked incessantly at the case, and was completely successful in clearing the memory of the unfortunate man. At least half a dozen other cases could be adduced of his bold and single-handed onslaughts on the rottenness and presumption of the judicial system of France. He became a terror to evil-doers everywhere; the winsome fascination of his style and his deadly powers of satire, drove home his doctrines with irresistible force; he had the ear of Europe, and he would not be silenced. Voltaire's campaign against judicial abuses entitles him to rank as one of the greatest reformers of modern times, not as a mere critic or pamphleteer. He stands forth as a friend to the poor, a preacher of justice and mercy, who practised what he preached.

For many a long year after his death, Voltaire was regarded by pious and worthy people, not as a teacher of virtue and moderation, but as a kind of restless demon and trumpeter of unbelief. It would be more reasonable to maintain that, by stigmatising the ferocious bigotry of his time, he did an enormous service to practical Christianity. His satirical arrows and fiery darts never did any harm to true religion, but were cutting and fatal to the deplorable abuses which were perpetrated by unscrupulous men in the name of higher things. No one now denies that the brutalities and burnings, in which mediæval and post-Reformation zealots indulged, were wholly alien to the pure and lofty teaching of the Master. Voltaire wished men to live reasonably, side by side, and refrain from massacring one another for the sake of creeds and metaphysical definitions. Human progress seemed to him impossible so long as society was disturbed by the sanguinary brawls of rival sects.

Nature endowed Voltaire with mental talents of the most splendid kind, but denied him one gift, the choicest of all, the gift of spiritual discernment. His thoughts rarely went beyond this world, and he was quite unsuited for religious contemplation. When he has occasion, in any of his great historical chapters (which are the glory of French Literature and the high water-mark of ordered human speech in prose), to talk of the higher forms of religious experience, his defects become at once apparent. When he attacks (as he so often does) ill-grounded pretence, sectarian animosity, and the insolence of office, we can applaud him without

reserve, for he is doing God's service. But when he is confronted by the genuine sublimities of religion, he is seen to be fatally lacking, even as Gibbon was, in the competence to appreciate. In such cases his flippancy is merely an astounding proof of spiritual blindness. Nobody was ever less qualified to speak of the mysteries of the soul and the great realities of the inner life. Voltaire can no more understand the mysticism and rapt joy of a devout Catholic saint than a blind man can discuss the colours of the rainbow. Sublimity is entirely out of his ken.

Voltaire's mission in life was to eliminate absurdities from human society, and to introduce more sweetness and light and civilisation into the actions of mankind. Like Lucian, in the old world, he employed the dangerous weapons of irony and disrespect. Voltaire taught his countrymen to laugh at the pretensions of obsolete authority, and the disrespect he instilled was one of the most potent causes of the great political upheaval of 1789. The strategy, industry, and ability of Voltaire, in his life-long campaign against tyranny and injustice, are marvellous. He is the greatest journalist of all time. It cannot be denied that much of the work he did was urgently needed; that he did it in the swiftest and most effective way; and that his motives were, in the main, high-pitched and honourable. The world owes a deep debt of gratitude to such a brilliant and tireless philanthropist. Let those who, without knowing his books, have a prejudice against them, read the exquisite life of Voltaire, by Lord Morley of Blackburn, and remember that—

> "Whoever thinks a faultless *man* to see,
> Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be."

MODERN EULOGISTS OF GENEVA.

Those who wish to see how well literature is cultivated in the Geneva of to-day, may be recommended to read such annuals as *Genève Littéraire* and the various publications of the National Institute. The sturdy republican town continues to preserve its civic patriotism (which, for intensity, is like that of an ancient Greek state), its incurable love for *pensées* and maxims, and its thorough cultivation of philosophy and criticism.

The latest poetical eulogy I have seen is that by M. Julliard, an artful poet, whose dainty (but narrow) lines meander through broad meadows of margin, thus:

"O Genève
Où s'élève
Mon toit,
Je rêve
Sans trêve
A toi!
Mon âme
Réclame
Son nid
Béni;
Salève
Qui lève
Son gros
Bon dos
De phoque
Provoque
Mes désirs."

M. Julliard sings eloquently of many of the most impressive sights that everyone who has visited Geneva will recall: the great lake, covered with its white-sailed skiffs; the swans that "float double" along the quays

the clear, swift Rhone and turbid Arve; the cathedral of Saint-Pierre, with its holy memories; and various landmarks dear to local patriotism. He has seen another city by the waters, Stamboul, namely, and feels himself justified in preferring his own liberty-loving birthplace:

"O ma cité
Rien n'égale
Ta beauté
Idéale
Ta rivale
Orientale
En vain m'étale
Sa mer d'opale."

The finest eulogies of Geneva are to be found in the English, not in the French, language. The most ardent lover of the town I ever met was an Englishman, and he spoke to me for two consecutive hours on the glories of the place, embodying in his harangue a rapt recitation from Ruskin's *Praeterita*: "A little canton, four miles square, and which did not wish to be six miles square! A little town, composed of a cluster of water-mills, a street of penthouses, two wooden bridges, two dozen of stone houses on a little hill, and three or four perpendicular lanes up and down the hill. . . . And this bird's-nest of a place, to be the centre of religious thought, and of physical beauty, to all living Europe! . . . The most lovely spot, and the most notable, without any possible dispute, of the European universe." The English gentleman I refer to had left his native land, and taken up his abode in the town he loved so dearly. As there used to be zealots in France who were

more *royalistes* than the *roi*, so it might be said of him that he was more *genevois* than the Genevese. His enthusiasm was based on a very accurate knowledge of history, and he knew the literature of the canton well. For one thing, I am deeply indebted to him: he recommended me to read the stories of the Genevese novelist, Victor Cherbuliez. I venture, after the pleasant experience of doing so, to pass on the recommendation to others. Cherbuliez's page is as clear and limpid as the Rhone, and seems to flow as swiftly. (Messrs. Hachette will give you most of his books at a franc a-piece, and all are good.)

"Take note of this," said the above-mentioned Englishman, "that there is no such thing as sycophancy in this country. If the Czar of Russia or the Emperor of Germany were to pay us a visit, they would be received cordially enough, but there would be no flattery or prostration. Isn't it splendid that, in at least one country of the world, titles and baubles are held in no esteem whatever? It is practically the rule here that no civil servant or public employee is allowed to accept a merely complimentary decoration from a foreign potentate. The rule is salutary, and that in two ways: firstly, because the Swiss themselves are happier without decorations, and secondly, because foreign rulers can come here and drink toasts and be happy, without the nuisance of having to throw handfuls of rosettes and ribbons and plaques among the officials of the country. The Swiss are of opinion that if a human being is possessed of virtue and talent, his fellow-citizens will discover the fact for themselves, without the aid of such

kickshaws. The Swiss, I say, are free, in a far more thorough way than the French and the Americans. It is possible for a country to call itself a republic, and still be under the thraldom of glitter, pomp, and trappings. Switzerland has liberated herself not merely from tyrants, but from the ensigns of tyrants. Her mountaineers, with their robust arms, her proud peasants and her strenuous artisans, feel no need of badges and trinkets. It is by diligent work and upright actions that they seek to advance the civilisation of the world. In the streets of those picturesque towns that are built on the margin of the Swiss lakes, in those wooden châlets that are perched on the edge of the sheer mountain-cliffs, and in the abodes of the shepherd on the leafy slopes of the hill-valleys, democracy has found her sure home. I suppose you know," he said, stopping short suddenly, "what Voltaire said of liberty in Switzerland."

I confessed to him that I could not recall, on the spur of the moment, the particular passage of Voltaire to which he alluded, but that I should feel gratified if he could see his way to quote it.

"The passage to which I refer," he replied, "occurs in a poem on the 'Lake of Geneva,' written by Voltaire, in the year 1755, and runs thus:

'On ne voit point ici la Grandeur insultante
Portant de l'épaule au côté
Un ruban que la Vanité
A tissu de sa main brillante;
Ni la Fortune insolente
Repoussant avec fierté

La prière humble et tremblante
De la triste Pauvreté.
On ne méprise point les travaux nécessaires;
Les états sont égaux, et les hommes sont frères,
Liberté, Liberté, ton trône est dans ces lieux.'"

The passage being very fine, I took a note of it, and was on the point of leaving when he detained me an instant with a question:

"By the way, have you observed how very intellectual the shopkeepers in Geneva are?" I replied that they struck me as having a very keen eye to business, much like shopkeepers everywhere.

"But surely," he continued, "you must have noticed that they are, mentally, very alert."

"They certainly seem to know what they are about," I replied.

"If you ever have occasion," he remarked, "to do business with any of the Genevese druggists, you will be astonished at the extent of their knowledge. They are acquainted with the weights and measures of every country in the civilised world. When I first came to Geneva, I was very much troubled with a bronchial affection, especially at the time when the *bise* was blowing. I had suffered from the same cause in England too, and had a prescription in my possession that had been drawn up by a London doctor. I handed the prescription to a druggist in Geneva here, and, without saying a word, he instantly and accurately made up my potion. It would have been all the same if the prescription had been written in Rome or Vienna. Marvellous men, and honest too! *They* won't charge

you five francs for a bottle of pure water (as is done in Paris) and say the stuff comes from some renowned, far-off mineral spring."

A FRENCHMAN'S CRITICISMS.

In the year 1837, that peculiar, cold, and analytic writer, Henri Beyle (or Stendhal, as he called himself), came to Geneva, after making a tour through the south-eastern regions of France. He wrote a journal of his wanderings, which has not, so far as I know, been translated into English, but which deserves to be. His account of Geneva consists of a series of quick, penetrative criticisms, interspersed with descriptions and anecdotes. Although discursive and fragmentary, Stendhal's account is really (when you have pieced together all his items) wonderfully complete and illuminating. Such unity as the book possesses, comes from the author's remarkable personality. He throws in a good deal of literary criticism by the way, and all he says has a background of geography and history. He begins his account by paying a compliment to the lake: *Enfin, je revois ce beau lac, si vaste, si magnifiquement entouré!* "The lake raises up in the mind ideas which are less serious, less sublime than the real sea, but which are *more tender*. It was Rousseau that made the reputation of the Lake of Geneva (*my lake*, he called it), and yet that great man is still despised and misunderstood in most of these beautiful towns, which I see on its banks there in the distance. It is a fact, that over the way, in Savoy, people do not even know his name. In the Swiss towns, Rousseau is traduced every day of the year, and

I am glad of it for his sake. It is far better, if his name is to be remembered, that a great man, who is no more, should be the subject of slanders. The glory of a writer has a duration proportionate to the injustice of people's views respecting him." After this pleasant reflection, Stendhal proceeded to visit the house where Jean-Jacques was born, and was disgusted to find the old building gone, and a fine new six-story house erected on the site. He consoled himself with the reminiscences of a former day. "I have often seen the little bare-joisted room where Rousseau was born, and on one occasion I found it tenanted by a poor watchmaker, who possessed a tawdry edition of Rousseau's works, which, however, he understood. We talked for an hour together on the *Contrat Social*, a work, the leading merit of which resides, I think, in the title. Generally speaking, these Genevese working-men understand arguments, that in France would seem far above people in their station. . . . The artisans in Geneva are apt to shock a foreign visitor, especially if he is an aristocrat, for *they are never obsequious.*"

"In many respects," says Stendhal, "the Genevese mind resembles the English, and in no point more strikingly than in a false estimate of the value of irony. Neither the Genevese nor the English can follow the light and witty dialogue of Regnard, who is the gayest of all our French comedians. . . . The deep, satirical genius of Molière suits them much better; however, the veritable comedy for English and Genevese alike, is that of Shakespeare—which is full of grace, and which represents men as we should so much like to see

them in real life. The melancholy Jacques is more to their liking than the misanthropic Alceste.

"I like the Genevese till he comes to the age of forty. Very often, at that age, he has made a fortune, large or small, as the case may be; and thereupon is seen the leading deficiency of his education: he does not know how to take pleasure out of his money, for he has never been taught how to live in a condition of prosperity. He becomes severe and puritanical, and is irritated with all who enjoy themselves or look as if they did. He calls all such *des gens immoraux.*

"The Genevese style of writing is *painful* in the extreme, and gives one the impression of a team of oxen laboriously dragging a ploughshare. Their French is exact enough, but always cramped. When their writers desire to assume a tone of ease, suitable for telling a tale of no special moment, they give fair warning to the reader that great frivolity is about to ensue. Though they fail to hit on the right phrases in this *genre*, yet they may truthfully say, in the words of Boileau:

Mais mon vers, bien ou mal, dit toujours quelque chose.

A Genevese book has always something in it."

There is enough truth in Stendhal's epigrams to make them tolerable. It is highly amusing to note that Stendhal's own prose style has been mercilessly denounced by the critics. But if he has a poor style, he is like the Genevese in this sense, that he always means something. And he can praise pretty heartily too at times, which is always a good feature in a man.

LAUSANNE.

I have paid but one lengthy visit to the beautiful town of Lausanne, and that was for the love of Gibbon, greatest of historians. The town is at no great distance from Geneva by rail, but has a distinct *cachet* of its own. For one of feeble knees and scanty breath, the steep streets are a trial, but the upper parts, with their far views of water and hill, are worth climbing to. Ouchy, on the lake, lies in hot, midge-infested air, and is not a good locality to sleep in at night. The *hotel Gibbon* is the right place for good fare, tranquil slumber, and historical souvenirs. Lausanne, in summer, is glorious, with its blue sky, blazing sun, sharply defined shadows, and light breezes rippling with visible heat. Gibbon made the town his home for many a year, engaged in the composition of that great work which has been described as the Golden Bridge between the old world and the new, *monumentum perennius aere.* Who can avoid admiring a man like Milton, Gibbon, or Spencer, in love with a mighty task and directing every energy to its accomplishment? Everything has to go down under a great ambition—love, luxury, ease, and worldly consideration. All these Gibbon resigned, and toiled his way joyfully into immortal renown. He would, himself, have regarded as of small account, that renown which comes from a mention in Baedeker, and which sets illiterate tourists a-snapshotting in front of a hotel. By far the greater number of Gibbon's admirers have never been to Lausanne: they can't afford the railway fare. If I knew any man that could really and

truly get into telephonic communication with the Shades, I should entreat him to convey a message to the great historian, to the effect that certain Scotch peasants of my acquaintance have, several times, read through all the chapters of the *Decline and Fall*, and are not satisfied yet! A Briton can hardly walk the streets of Lausanne without thinking of other scenes with which Gibbon is associated, and which are described in the garrulous and charming pages of James Boswell. It did not require the copy of Boswell, which I saw exposed for sale on a bookseller's counter in Lausanne, to stir reminiscences of Dr. Johnson and his friends. That wonderful club, of which Gibbon was a member, and Boswell, the chronicler, is capable of furnishing a liberal education to those who study the life and works of its members. No department of thought was left untouched by those eager and vivacious geniuses. What sound instruction, what wit, humour, and art they have left us! Goldsmith, Burke, Reynolds, Boswell, Gibbon, and Johnson are destined to be the contemporaries of every generation. It is a far cry from London to Lausanne, but literature has joined them in a legitimate association.

One result of the Swiss republican form of Government, is the great freedom and individuality of each component part in the Federation. Lausanne in no way resembles Geneva, and though French is the language of both towns, one is conscious of differences in respect of pronunciation and idiom. Lausanne has its own distinct literary traditions. The critic, Vinet, is splendidly representative of the sturdy and cultured

Protestantism of the town. Those who have had the pleasure of reading his literary history of the eighteenth century, cannot have failed to admire the fine taste of the man and his scrupulous fairness in estimating the literary gifts of many writers from whose views he, as a Protestant pastor, must have strongly dissented. His sermons, which are of a devout evangelical tone, were long ago translated into English, and are similar in doctrine and fervour to the grand religious homilies of the Scotch Disruptionist divines. Other cantonal preachers, such, for example, as the members of the Monod family, have as much earnestness as Vinet, but without his intellect. It is an item in the literary annals of Lausanne that Sainte-Beuve gave some of his Port Royal lectures in the local University.

The Lausanne of to-day retains its great reputation for education. The town is full of young people from all parts of the world, who have been attracted thither by the high reputation of the schools, the beauty of the scenery, and the health-giving properties of the climate.

COPPET AND THE NECKERS.

Gibbon's name is again recalled to the mind by the village of Coppet, which lies in quiet, quaint beauty on the lake-side, about eight miles from Geneva. It was here that Necker, the great finance-minister to Louis XVI., had his château. When the name of Necker is mentioned, the memory is ready to run down many a great avenue of past history and think of Burke and the French Revolution, and all the consequent deeds of blood that stained France and Europe. There is a con-

centrated interest, however, in the history of individuals who were geniuses. *Gibbon was, in his youth, the lover of the lady who became Madame Necker*, and whose maiden name was Susan Curchod. In 1789, after the *Decline and Fall* was finished, and Gibbon's fame was known to all the world, the historian wrote his memoirs, and spoke, in periods that are touching, in spite of their restraint and polish, of his early and only romance. "I hesitate," he said, "from the apprehension of ridicule, when I approach the delicate subject of my early love. . . . I need not blush at recollecting the object of my choice; and though my love was disappointed of success, I am rather proud that I was once capable of feeling such a pure and exalted sentiment." *Rather proud* is, indeed, a mild way of putting it! The phrase is far removed from the piercing lyrical cry of "Ye banks and braes." Gibbon goes on to tell that his stern father in England would not hear of the alliance. "After a painful struggle, I yielded to my fate: I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son; my wound was insensibly healed by time, absence, and the habits of a new life. My cure was accelerated by a faithful report of the tranquillity and cheerfulness of the lady herself, and my love subsided in friendship and esteem." These sentences have a bitter and unpleasant taste; but the old father was the ally of Fate, which had decreed that the *Decline and Fall* must be written. Mademoiselle Susan was married to the rich banker, Necker, and became the mother of a girl whose uncommon genius and inexhaustible verve were, in after years, a terror, even to Napoleon the Great.

This girl, Germaine Necker, was born in Paris, in 1766, and shone as a conversationist before she was in her teens. Her mother's drawing-room was the resort of the most famous wits of the time, and the girl's precocious judgment and sparkling talk were an attraction to the brightest spirits of the capital. At the age of twenty, through the instrumentality of Queen Marie-Antoinette, she became the wife of Baron de Staël, the Swedish ambassador. The Revolution forced her to quit France, and she, in vain, tried to cast her spell over Napoleon, who, fearing her epigrams, forbade her to enter Paris. She was cosmopolitan in her literary tastes; wrote admiringly on German and Italian literature; loved the weird strains of Ossian; and was a restless traveller. A catalogue of the men who visited her at Coppet, would include (to mention but a few) Benjamin Constant, the author of *Adolphe*; Schlegel, the translator of Shakespeare into German; and Bonstetten, who had been the friend of the English poet Gray. An American traveller, who saw her in her widowed years at Coppet, pictures her as surrounded by an admiring court of men, whom she fascinated by her conversation. "Her features were good, but her complexion bad. . . . She had a certain roundness and amplitude of form. . . . She was never at a loss for the happiest of expressions, *but deviated into anecdotes that might be an offence to American ears.*"

British readers may well be pardoned for taking a special interest in her novel of *Corinne*, of which the heroine is herself, and one of the leading characters a phlegmatic Scot, named Nelvil. It was left for the

present Duke of Argyll to inform the world, by the printing of original letters that had been lying in Inverary Castle for a hundred years, that Nelvil was none other than that Lord John Campbell, who was nearly caught by Napoleon at Baden, and who escaped by dressing himself in women's clothes. Lord John deserted her, even as Gibbon deserted her mother. In 1811, four years after the publication of *Corinne*, she married a young Swiss officer, named Rocca, who was her senior by twenty-one years. This second marriage was a great success. She died in 1817, leaving behind her the manuscript of a work on the French Revolution, and another entitled *Dix Années d'Exil.*

There is thus plenty to think of when one alights at Coppet, and *this thought among others*, that though Napoleon might banish the lady from France, the intellectual victories were all on her side.

ON THE SALÈVE.

If you are ever in the neighbourhood of Geneva, you will do well to spend a day on the great, sloping, irregular hill, called the Salève, which is on the Savoy side of the town. If you are a pedestrian, and love the open road, a satchel, with something solid and a little liquid, and a firm walking-stick, will be all that is necessary. A great broad road mounts the noble hill and dexterously coils and twists at all the steeper parts, to make them easier for horse and man. Don't be like that misguided, crazy youth, in *Excelsior*, who carried a flag at twilight, and never looked behind him. No good could come of such eccentric conduct. Start *you*

at early morn; carry no flags; stop frequently on the ascent and gaze back on the beautiful city you have left and the great lake's far-extending floor of blue. If you are a bookish man, and have memories of ennobling hours with Byron and Gibbon (you know the direction of Lausanne, if you don't see it), or of Madame de Staël (Coppet *can* be seen), why, fill your pipe and sit down beside that "Calvary," on an eminence at the corner of the road, and let all these memories of the soul surge up and mix with the natural beauties that fall spontaneous on the ear and eye. You will have more enjoyment out of the *Decline and Fall* next time you read it, from having seen a little of the gorgeous panorama Gibbon daily viewed. Straight across the lake from where you sit are the frontier peaks of Jura, round which Byron saw the lightnings play. Change penetrates slowly there, for in our day, as in his, the mountain paths of that dark Jura range are not devoid of smugglers. A mile or two past the Calvary, you come to an inhabited shelf in the hill, with a village, a church, and a tavern, having, in large, far-seen letters, the announcement, *tenu par le petit bossu* (kept by the little hunchback). You are now in France, if you please, and your watch, if a reliable one, is an hour slow. Just for the fun of the thing, go into the little hunchback's place, and compare your watch with his clock, and *don't forget* to drain a bumper to the "entente cordiale" before leaving. If it is a hot day you may drain another to the glory and long life of the *Third Republic*. The suitable terminus of your stroll is another larger, grander hotel, at a retreat called

Monnetier. On the way you may see a train travelling along the hill-side, at high speed, in the same direction as yourself. The train is that of the famous funicular railway, which, leaving Geneva on the lake-side, mounts the steep slopes of the ferny-green Salève up to the terminal station of *Thirteen Trees*, where there is a refreshment room, and where tourists drink sparkling wines and gaze thereafter in rapt admiration over the sea of mists—that fill the intervening valley and look like a floor suitable for the feet of gods to tread—at the sparkling peaks of Mount Blanc and his snow-capped brothers.

GENIUS AND HARD WORK.

The landlady of the hotel at Monnetier is a kind and motherly woman, quite able and willing to talk with you in a voluminous way, once you have gained her confidence. There are not many cleverer women in the French province of Savoy, and her hotel is known far and wide for comfort and good fare. In one of the rooms is a fine portrait of Miss Ellen Terry, signed by the great actress herself. You look at the portrait admiringly, and then at the landlady, who sees at once you would like information. "Yes, yes," she says, "we are all very fond of Miss Terry here. She frequently spends a week or two in Monnetier to get her nerves braced up. But I fear she never really gives herself entire rest, she is so much in love with her profession. Acting is in her blood, and even when on holiday she cannot forget the work to which she is devoted. She brings

with her to the hotel portraits representative of every mood of grace and emotional attitude, and with these she decks all the corners of the room, wherever a piece of cardboard will stand. The man of business tries to rid himself of the thought of work when he quits the city for a vacation; but Miss Terry, exhausting though her triumphs on the stage may be, does not think fit to allow her mind repose. The British public gets the benefit of all this practice.

"All the devotees of Art who visit us, do not leave such gracious souvenirs behind them. We had a Parisian actress with us once whose doings were sometimes disquieting. Attired in a loose gown, she would sit for a whole forenoon, twining pieces of wool and thread round her fingers, in a vacant and pensive fashion. That was certainly not idleness: she was probably practising for the part of some innocent village maid. But you ought to have seen the result of her rehearsals when high tragedy had been occupying her thoughts. Oh, là, là! pillows, sheets, mattresses, quilts, lay confusedly tumbled, ruffled and awry, in unspeakable topsy-turvydom all about the room. The maids were wont to stand aghast, not knowing where to begin. You would have said that two playful young lions had been frisking about and indulging in a pillow-fight. Mademoiselle X had great strength when the tragic fury was on her, slim and tiny though she was. One day, the renowned Mlle. Réjane went past on the funicular to the high station of *Treize Arbres*, without calling here. Oh! the tears that the other shed, not stage tears but real ones, for she was sorry at missing

an interview with that Queen of the French stage. Neither was aware of the proximity of the other; and only when Mlle. Réjane had gone, did the news of her passage become known." I hinted to Madame that it was, perhaps, as well for the hotel that two renowned declaimers were not staying in the house at the same time. Consider the results to the house-gear if Mlle X, practising for Phèdre, had been doing violence to the mattresses in one room, while Mlle. Réjane, in another, had been rehearsing the part of the talented washer-woman, in Madame Sans-gêne! *

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* Such items of information as Madame gives are extremely interesting, as proving the continuous and exacting toil that Art imposes, even on its most gifted devotees. Both the dramatist and the actor have their throes and writhings. It is not everyone that writes down on paper (as Ducis did in his letters to Talma) the humorous side of artistic effort. Said Ducis to the great actor: "*We are a pair of villains* who work at our crimes by night. As for me, I strive to place myself in the inmost recesses of the cursed valleys, by the light of Tisiphone's torch, on the banks of the infernal river. *Bonjour*, my associate, in sin and remorse. Oh, depraved one! I greet you with a smile. Please keep yourself in good condition for the perpetration of new iniquities. Our united efforts will, in no long time, have perverted the conscience of all good people in the land. My new recension of Hamlet is of the same dough as the cake you have already made the public swallow. I have spiced the piece, as much as possible, with grace, pity, and *terr-r-or!* In other words, I have dipped my pen in Dante's ink-pot. Come on, oh, reprobate; think of furies, cries, and groans! The muse of Tragedy blew her inspiration on you in your cradle. You know the genuine accents both of crime and love. There is not a gendarme in France, but would be justified in arresting you. Adieu, my dear, dear friend."

VISITORS TO MONNETIER.

It is worth while staying for a summer week in the hotel at Monnetier, if for nothing but to see the *va-et-vient* of visitors. Not the least interesting of these are bands of school-girls, under the supervision of their teachers, who leave their tasks for an afternoon, and ascend by the cable-railway, to spend a free, fresh hour on the hills. Geneva is full of schools, and hundreds of the girls are English. As the town becomes like a furnace on a hot day of summer, it must give the girls no small pleasure, at such a time, to leave the shimmering lake-side, and taste the exhilarating air of the heights. In linked companies, flower-decked, they ramble, botanise, and sing along the paths. To see them thus sporting and laughing at will, is a gladdening sight, for their bright youth and coloured dresses embellish the landscape. Here they look happier than when, in ordered ranks, they are being conducted to the college lectures.

When I was at Monnetier, much amusement was caused by the demeanour of a little English girl who had to be isolated for whooping-cough. She had been brought up to the hotel, seemingly in good health, but the disease had developed and, to prevent contagion, the child was not allowed to leave her room. The French, let me remark, are rather afraid of *la coqueluche*. Between the spasms the little sprite sang merrily enough, but she resented the lack of freedom. She took a kind of revenge by trying to frighten the visitors. Coming out to the balcony of her room, she would shout

aloud, in English and French, the news of her illness, which she knew it was desirable to conceal: "Hallo! hallo! I have whooping-cough; I have whooping-cough; *J'ai la coqueluche.*" And then the little minx, forcibly pulled from behind by the mother, would disappear.

Not many hundred yards from the hotel is a small cottage, humble enough in appearance, but admirably placed for viewing every peak of the Mount Blanc range that lies, mysterious, visionary, and white, against the far blue sky. I do not envy the man who can look at distant mountains without feeling within him a vehement and poetic stir. It is at such times that you are profoundly thankful for some lordly line of inspired verse from a real poet, one who felt as you feel, but who had the power of language to crystallise his emotion in fitting words. I mention this cottage because it was the temporary abode, many years ago, of a great and good man, John Ruskin, a landscape-lover and a lord of language, as truly as ever Virgil was. Here he sat, rapt in wonder and amazement, for hours together; and for our delight and instruction wrote down what he saw, in the light of the Lamp of Memory.

A SEARCHER FOR WILD FLOWERS.

I have hardly ever walked over the Salève without encountering a botanist. He is a most interesting person to meet: you can always learn something from him, especially if you are able to participate in his magnificent enthusiasm for "those stars that in earth's firmament do shine." Look at him, with herbarium

slung over his shoulder, seated on a boulder beside a burn, and gazing with joy, too deep for words, on some new-found marvel of tinted beauty. For him the hours fleet past without a moment of weariness. I admire the botanist in that he is utterly unselfish. Granted that a particular dell is discovered by him to be prolific in certain floral rarities: he will take his share certainly, and thank God for it, but how careful he will be to leave abundance for those who come after him! "Heaven forbid that I should strip bare the bosom of any hill!" said a Geneva botanist, whom I met near Monnetier. These words he uttered with a certain solemnity that showed how profound was his love for Nature's treasures. When Ruskin talks of flowers and vegetation, his speech trembles with emotion and thankfulness: "The earth," he says, "in its depths, must remain dead and cold, incapable except of slow crystalline change; *but at its surface, which human beings look upon and deal with, it ministers to them through a veil of strange intermediate being;* which breathes, but has no voice; moves, but cannot leave its appointed place; passes through life without consciousness, to death without bitterness; wears the beauty of youth without its passion; and declines to the weakness of age without its regret."

I can listen with pleasure to specialists in any department of natural investigation, taking good care not to contradict them. Botanists, zoologists, entomologists —in sum, all those who have an open-air hobby— are princes of the earth, men to be admired, not contradicted. My love for Nature is of an entirely

unpretentious and non-specialised kind. It is the *general impression* of wild-flowers which I enjoy: I have no ambition to go down on my knees and give a Latin name to those petalled specks of beauty. Similarly with rocks, trees, ferns, and most of the innumerable things that buzz. Persons who are dogmatic about these can have their way for me.

It was a lovely day, that on which I met the above-mentioned Geneva botanist on the slopes of the Salève. The chain of Mount Blanc was visible in all its length, but he had no eye for mountains. All his thoughts were concentrated on an old mossy wall, near the boulder on which he was sitting. "Look at that wall," he exclaimed, with great fervour. "Isn't it beautiful! There are not two stones in it of the same size, and the mortar, that ought to bind them, is so old and damp and soft, that it can be removed with the point of a walking-stick. The spiders have woven their webs over some of the crevices, and, when the wind blows, the gossamer flaps in front of the crumbling lime. The stones are mottled, here and there, with clumps of moss of every shade of green. What sights of beauty the microscope would evoke from that vivid verdure of decay! At the foot of the wall, a burn, six inches broad, gushes like a miniature Amazon, through thick savanas of lush grass, docks, ferns, nettles, and fair-petalled wild flowers. Regard the flawless balance of these leaves—every notch and finger and tooth and fritter on the right, is reproduced on the left, and the whole is a marvel of beauty that Nature scatters abroad in winsome profusion. There is really as much sublimity in this little spot as

in the range of Alpine peaks on the far side of the valley."

A HILL FARM.

Near the mossy wall that so strongly attracted the attention of the botanist, was a hill farm that was also worthy of regard, for it presented a series of pictures that stood out most distinctly in the clear air. I can see that steading now with perfect vividness. While the botanist was cataloguing his ferns and flowers, and, no doubt, disfiguring them with the barbarous nomenclature of science, I looked over at the farm. A brood of young turkeys were clucking and gibbering in a fenced field on the right, and suggesting pleasant thoughts of the way in which they might, by and by, help to promote peace on earth and goodwill to men. An old dog, stretched out to his fullest length, and with nose touching the ground between his extended fore-paws, looked wonderingly at the absurd antics of two calves, that had recently come into the world and evidently thought it a fine place to frolic in. A muscular maiden, healthy and broad, was wheeling a barrow-load of fodder into a byre. In a field, on the left, adjoining the steading, two men were up on the summit of a gigantic haystack, against which a ladder was leaning. The farmer himself, old, straight, and tall, and with a broad-brimmed straw hat on his head, kept shouting commands to the men from below. From the gate of the farm, a maid was coming forth with a jug of cream and a basket of eggs. The whole scene was worthy of Theocritus, and would have stimulated an artist to transfer it to canvas.

The beauty of a farm lies in its fundamental relation to the succession of the seasons, the rhythmic order of Nature, and the existence of civilised man. "Earth's increase and foison plenty" impress the eye more in a farm than anywhere else, for everything (furrows, seed, plough, manure, calves, sheep, haystacks) is suggestive of Nature's tireless bounty, and man's equally tireless evocation of nourishment from her boundless stores. If any gloved exquisite should turn away in disdain from the milky odours of the dairy, the acrid exhalations of the stall, and the heavy fragrances of the productive earth, he would merely prove how far removed he was from fact and reality. Out of the earth comes everything that is, was, or shall be, and the farmer, who is in close contact with the Great Mother, is surely a man to be preëminently revered. He is the guarantee of civilisation, and wherever he is firmly settled, barbarism flees away and law becomes established. Let us regard the farm-house as a shrine, in the cult of which faith and works are equally prominent, and in which, too, there is no lack of pervasive incense.

The best way to preserve an optimistic spirit is to associate as much as possible with the rural population of a country. There, if anywhere, you will find good nature, happiness, and splendid courage in the face of difficulties. Limited wants, fully-occupied days, plenty of fresh air, and simple piety, pretty well exclude melancholy from the mind of the peasant folk.

> "Who doth ambition shun
> And loves to live i' the sun,
> Seeking the food he eats
> And pleased with what he gets;

Come hither, come hither, come hither,
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But winter and rough weather."

L'agriculture, says Rousseau, *est le premier métier de l'homme, c'est le plus honnête, le plus utile, et par conséquent le plus noble qu'il puisse exercer.*

THE PROCESSION OF THE CONSCRIPTS.

In all Continental countries, the Briton is struck by the emphatic protrusion of the military element. The tramp of armed men going to, or coming from drill; bare swords and bugle-din; great barracks right in the heart of towns; immense fortifications and fortresses; all speak to him of the enmity of nations, the plague of war, and the huge mockery of millennial speeches. In no nook of the country, however remote, can the tourist get away from drums and tramplings.

One afternoon, at this village of Monnetier in the High Savoy, I was startled by a confused din of voices chanting the Marseillaise, and beheld, at some distance from the hotel, a crowd of sturdy young fellows following music and a flag. These lads, mostly peasants, were the conscripts, whose time for military service had just arrived. They were all very jolly, to a greater degree, perhaps, than perfect sobriety could account for. No doubt they were shouting obtrusively to drive grief away and keep up their spirits. I must say that the women-folk, who stood regarding them from door and window, looked plaintive and tearful enough. On the morrow the lads would be off and away to barracks,

in different parts of France, and their native village be deprived of their labour for a year or two.

The procession of the conscripts formed, as you may suppose, the subject of much talk among the British tourists in the smoking-room of the hotel. One English gentleman, a stockbroker, who had *no sons* in his family, thought it a splendid thing that every French youth had to pass some time *sous les drapeaux:* "Such compulsory and universal military service is good," he said, "for breaking down the artifical absurdities of caste, and for bringing home to the minds of all, the august notions of patriotism, fatherland, and devotion. I feel rather ashamed that there is nothing in my own country to appeal, in the same wholesome and emphatic manner, to the tens of thousands of muscular young fellows who frequent football matches, and to prove to them that they are needed items of national defence, and that the privileges of citizenship have correlative duties. Were it only for the tendency to promote comradeship and solidarity between classes and masses, universal military service would be a boon."

These remarks met with general approval and were especially relished by the *colonel of the company.**

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* In Continental health resorts, one often encounters a retired colonel of the British army. These military gentlemen are tireless wanderers. They have roamed so much, in their prime, through the colonies, that when their camp days are done, they find that a staid and settled life of humdrum citizenship is repugnant to them. A man who has served his country in half-a-dozen Indian frontier campaigns, is not likely to feel at ease in a peaceful British home. When he comes back from the East with his pension and, perhaps,

"You have expressed yourself very well indeed," said the military gentleman. "Nothing, it seems to me, is more desirable in Britain than the institution of universal military service. Our young fellows stand greatly in need of drill and discipline, both rich and poor of them. The army is the best school for teaching the duty of service to the State. No State can be really strong unless every citizen is willing and able to work for the general welfare, by soldiering if need be. Patriotism is the merest moonshine if unsupplemented by the practical readiness to march off and fight for one's home and country, when the time of stress arrives. As no man learns the trade of defence in a day, the need for training is apparent.

"Kipling and many others have pointed out that, in our country, the civilian is apt to look down upon the soldier, save during the time of war. It is painful to think of, but nevertheless true, that the army used to be considered a fit dumping-ground for wastrels. A mother thought herself disgraced if her son quitted his trade and joined the army. Our army would gain a higher prestige if all men were required by law, to pass, at least, a year of their life under the colours. Such a discipline would be most salutary, and would inculcate

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an uncertain liver, he soon tires alike of the life and the weather. If he has no encumbrances of family, he may elect to divide out his year in hydropathics and hotels, with the object of securing variety, cheapness, and the maximum of sun. Do not let us blame the ex-colonial because he is a roving blade. Seen at his best, he is a most interesting man, and his talk is by no means commonplace.

sympathy and admiration for those whose noble profession it is to defend the fatherland.

"Universal military service, while it would teach the duty of obedience at the call of the State and the reverence for authority, would also have a powerful democratising tendency. There would be no exemptions: 'duke's son, cook's son, son of a belted earl,' and son of a tradesman, would all have their training together, and be comrades in the same tent. Rich and poor would be brought into close contact, and all distinctions of social rank effaced by the State uniform. This juxtaposition of highest and lowest (socially speaking) is precisely the need of the present hour. The different classes of society are, as it is, parted by cleavages, great and even dangerous: it ought to be the business of the State to exact a common service, under impartial conditions, from all her children. The army would give rich and poor the opportunity of mutual sympathy and appreciation.

"Danger to a great commercial country often arises from the inroads of luxury, the absence of high ideals, the love of pleasure, the loss of civic unity, and the decay of the feeling of duty. Other people are hired to fight for those who know not how, and the army becomes a troop of mercenaries. May we never sink so low as that!"

There was a very warlike man of peace in the company, who discorded very violently with the stockbroker and the colonel. He had his reasons, too, and as he expressed these very fluently, I cannot but think he had said often to others what he then said to us. Fluency,

in the expression of ideas that are worth listening to, only comes after a good deal of practice. His remarks chilled the company: a listener always feels small, when subjected to a series of sentences that are somewhat too well-rounded and symmetrical. "Gentlemen," he said, "permit me to remind you that there are two methods of defending our native land, the *first* by means of armies and navies and tremendous engines of destruction—the smoking tube and the bolts of death; and the *second*, by establishing, at home, a healthy, a contented, and a prosperous population. All is not well in a nation that is infested with destitution and disease and unemployment—a ghastly trinity. Peace hath her victories no less renowned than war. If we could make life more tolerable for the thousands who now live on the margin of want, it would be a victory more glorious than a score of Trafalgars or Blenheims. It is needless to talk of progress and social reform, when the spirit of destruction and war takes possession of a nation. If countries go on as they are doing now, civilisation itself will sink under the weight and cost of the huge armies and navies we are trying to keep up. The only gleam of hope I see is this, that the nations of Europe can, if they like, and at any moment they like, throw off the terrible incubus of militarism. That they will do this, at no distant date, I both hope and believe. The nations have no quarrel with one another: nothing would please them better than to live in mutual peace and harmony. Look at the little republic of Switzerland, consisting of French, Germans, and Italians, all living together like brethren in unity. If it is possible

for these nations to live peacefully and in perfect freedom under the Red Cross, why not have a European Confederacy on similar lines? The Swiss, I say, have succeeded in federating twenty-five small States without doing violence to the patriotism of any of them, and without interfering in the slightest respect with local rights and customs. Do you not see that the conception of a larger nationality and a more cosmopolitan patriotism, emerges from the contemplation of such a feat? Just as the Cantons of the Swiss Confederation have been blended into one harmonious whole, representing all that was worthy in their national instincts, so the Empires of Europe might be federated, and a new patriotism, embracing the whole continent, come into being. If every European war were regarded as a civil war, militarism would fade. Suppress militarism, and, behold, what millions of money you have available for the amelioration of society. You call yourselves patriots, and by patriotism I suppose you mean love of your native land, pride in the country of your birth. Can you regard your native land with complacency when you know that so many of your fellow-citizens are grovelling in misery, ignorance, and starvation?"

There was silence for a long time after the foregoing tirade, and the well-meaning orator was gathering himself for another spring (if I may so put it) when the colonel called for a truce: "No, no," he said, "I am here on holiday. I admit you have a fine flow of words; a regular *hind let loose* you are. You have never been in India, however, or you would not have such confidence in being able to put down war. But I won't argue any

more to-night as it might unsettle my nerves for the game of golf I intend to play to-morrow in Geneva. A friend of mine, like myself, a retired army man, has sent me a challenge, and I should not like my beating to be too severe. The last time he beat me was on the course at Kilmacolm. Here's a health to you Mr. Pacificator: good-luck to you and more pith to your windpipe."

A FRENCH NOVELIST'S INDICTMENT OF MILITARY SERVICE.

In that most beautiful and touching story of French provincial life, *La Terre qui Meurt*, by M. Bazin of the Academy, there is a chapter (the eighth one) in which two old farmers, Lumineau and Massonneau, discuss the departure of the young men of their village for military service. The scene is laid in the district of La Vendée, but it might have been laid anywhere in France, for the novelist describes what the visitor, who has eyes to see, may witness in any department of the land. The two old men talk sadly of the ill effects of barrack-life on the lads from the country districts.

"They are bugling and singing at present, poor boys," says Lumineau. "But the parents of those who are going may well weep."

"Yes," says Massonneau, "the parents are to be pitied."

"I could name all the lads merely from hearing their voices. You good folk of the farms, I recognise your boys by their singing," continues Lumineau, enumerating the steadings one after the other. "*May the army not do the same work for them that it did for my François!*

They are going to the place that changed my boy's heart —to the town that robbed me of him."

This François, of whom old Lumineau speaks, had been ruined by the life of barracks. He had fallen an easy prey to the evils of a soldier's life: the loose talk at mess, the drinking habits of his companions, the constant attempts to shirk duty, the manifold corruptions into which young men are apt to fall when uprooted from home, and set down, without a guide, amid the temptations of a great city. When he came back from his military service, the farm-life was too monotonous for him. He thought it drudgery to dig the ground, look after cattle, and drain the marshes. He accordingly ran away from home, and disgraced his father by taking a situation at a menial calling in a neighbouring town. Not content with going himself, he lured his sister with him to keep his house and make his meals.

When Lumineau's younger son, André, came back from *his* time of soldiering, he worked well on the farm, and the old man was delighted. But, by and by, André became restless too. "My son André," said the father, "is quite different from any lad I ever knew, and not a bit like the stock he springs from. I don't say he despises farming, oh, no! he loves it, and I have no fault to find with his work on week-days. But since he came home from his regiment, his one idea on Sunday is *read, read* continually." In the process of the narrative we are informed that the literature with which the young fellow was so much engrossed, consisted mainly of *emigration pamphlets.* He became intoxicated with the glowing information contained in these papers, and

quite stunned his father with the eloquent account of what was doing in foreign lands. "Our taxes and rents here," said André, "are far too high. We are living a miserable existence, while out yonder, in America and the British Colonies, they are having magnificent harvests. They grow wheat without even having to dress the land. Everything now comes to us from abroad far cheaper than we can produce it ourselves. It makes me wild to think that there are districts in America where one can settle without paying a farthing. Why, the Government promises the emigrant a free passage, keeps him when he first lands, and gives him a ranch of seventy-four acres for nothing."

"You are telling me a parcel of lies, my boy," was the father's answer. "I am not much of a reader, it is true, but I do not let myself be taken in with all that stuff you swallow as if it were Gospel. Seventy-four acres! Governments would soon be ruined if they made a present like that to everyone that wanted it. It vexes me to hear our native land spoken ill of. Since you wish to cultivate it with me, my boy, don't run it down. It has always supported us well enough."

But André's wish was something very different. He too quitted the paternal acres, and the last glimpse we have of him is when he is leaving the mouth of the Scheldt, on board an emigrant vessel bound for America.

M. Bazin's story, of which I have just condensed one or two chapters, is, to some extent, an indictment of the French system of compulsory military service. He shows us that young men are *never the same* after they return from the barracks, that they are unsettled by the

life there, and rendered unfit for the calm and useful work of the farm. The novel, it is true, contains many other lessons.

IN A MOUNTAIN CHÂLET.

A Scotch minister, preaching on the well-known text, *And there shall be no more sea*, began by saying, in solemn tones, "Take yourselves in imagination into the vast depths of the great Pacific Ocean." This exordium follows the maxim that counsels us to go at once *in medias res*, and is worthy of imitation. In my attempt to picture rural Switzerland in the months of summer, I request the reader to take himself, in imagination, 3000 feet above the level of the plain, to the little village of Salvan, and to the *châlet Brunot* there, built of wood, and belonging to an Alpine guide. In summer, M. Brunot is not resident in his own châlet: he lets it to two Swiss ladies from the neighbourhood of Lucerne, Mlles. Buisson, aunt and niece, who receive guests in the place, and commendably increase their private finances to the extent of the difference between the sums paid to them by the guests, and the moderate rent exacted by the guide. Scattered here and there, on the face of the hillside that the châlet overlooks, are peasants' cottages, wooden all of them, and built on piles that make a space below for the domestic fowls. The peasants are strong and broad, not tall; the general impression they give is that of massiveness and resisting power. The women look feeble and careworn. The dialect is a corrupt mountain French, with a dash of Italian, and every glen of the canton has its own special

words. *Yo-va-ti?* for example, is Salvanese for *where are you going? i.e., où vas-tu?* The women of the place have a hard and bitter lot. They pass to and fro in companies to the woods, and on the return journey they are bent double under great loads of twigs and brushwood, like "le pauvre bûcheron tout couvert de ramée," of whom La Fontaine speaks. Look into any of the huts: even during the day they are ill-lighted, and the atmosphere is far from fresh. Every house has a goat. At early morning, a boy, with a horn, goes along the road and tootles amain. Goats bound out of every door, and follow the lad up through the forest paths to the green, soft pastures beyond. There they stay all day. At nightfall they descend home. When the animals are near the village, they break ranks, and each goat scampers to its own door. The observer is not long in perceiving the reason for this haste. At each door, a woman is waiting with a hot potato in her hand, as a toothsome tit-bit for her goat's return. So uneventful is the daily life of Salvan, that the visitors to the mountain, weighed upon by the slow, calm passage of the hours, welcome this evening return of the goats as a kind of variety in the day's proceedings, come out regularly to see it, and laugh sometimes when they see a goat getting its tongue burned with a potato that is too hot.

A SARATOGA TRUNK.

Perhaps it was a lapse from strict good taste on my part to take the reader so far up the Alps, without hinting that there were other methods, than that of

imagination, by which he might get there. If he really and truly wishes to go as a tourist to Salvan, and see these goats, James Watt will now take him all the way in comfort. But it was not always so, and I think the old method of footing it up-hill from Vernayaz, is better for those who wish excitement. When the traveller comes off the train at Vernayaz, he sees certain zig-zag appearances on the face of the mountain that confronts him. These are called *lacets*, and not so long ago they formed the main road to the village of Salvan that is perched aloft. I have heard Englishmen, esteemed devout at home, express themselves rather uncanonically when they saw where they had to go. It is a weary pilgrim's progress going up, a toilsome effort to counteract gravity, a dizzy and terrifying attempt at groping aloft, and dodging ravine and chasm. Yet these Alpine horses scale the route, sure-footed and unappalled. Let the tourist prefer his own feet, even though the twists of the road seem interminable: if his nerves begin to master him, let him lean against a rock, and imbibe, medicinally, some solution of courage out of his flask. Mishaps not infrequently happen during the ascent, one of which I shall narrate. An American, who painfully followed the vehicle that was conveying his luggage, saw an immense Saratoga trunk topple and tumble over into a yawning gorge. Bounding from rock to rock it flew, and burst at length: articles of apparel, over-wear and under-wear, scarfs, collars, cloaks, and socks, confusedly flew and fluttered by the foam of cascades and the Alpine dells. He came from Troy (the Transatlantic one), but his feelings were the same

as those of Aeneas, when that hero saw the treasures of Troy (gaza Trojae) lie floating and buffeted on the surface of the deep. Most Americans have resources of speech that suitably meet every emergency. His fellow-tourists crowded round him in the hope of hearing some unwonted verbal coruscations. He began pretty well by a swift volley of sounding interjections, and then, feeling he was not doing justice to his country's reputation, he desisted. "Give me time, gentlemen," he pleaded, "this is so sudden and awful. I am a little troubled with asthma, and this mountain path has taken my breath away. But I hope to give both myself and you satisfaction later on." The American's discretion was praiseworthy. Do not the poets inform us that the deepest feelings and the greatest misfortunes overpass the powers of language? Immense sorrows are stunning in their effects. A Saratoga trunk, flying in splinters and emptying its contents among the mountain torrents, is no common calamity, and would need a leash of languages for its adequate expression. No wonder the Trojan pleaded for time. The nature of the anabasis to Salvan, its turns and its perils, and what befell a worthy American, have been, as Xenophon would say, detailed in the preceding narrative. The châlot Brunot is a parasang or two higher up.

TWO VERY AUSTERE DAMES.

The Mlles. Buisson were conscientious and devout Protestant ladies, who surpassed, in primness and precision, any women I have ever met. They were ostentatiously and disquietingly methodical. It was

believed among us that they counted the potatoes sent in to dinner, and that every loaf put upon the table had had its dimensions previously measured by foot-rule or tape. All their proceedings were regulated on strict system, and I am certain they struck averages upon us, as the result of careful observation of each day's consumption of victuals. I do not connect these peculiarities with their rigorous creed: I merely state facts, and should be loth to think that an attachment to the widely-admired doctrine of predestination, implied mortification of the flesh and short rations. The worthy dames diffused, over the châlet and its grounds, an air of austerity and restraint that was somewhat out of place in the free and appetising air of the mountains. Every morning, before we put spoon in porridge (for, happily, we were regaled to that dish), one of them read, in cold and metallic tones, a long extract from the Psalms of David. I yield to no one in my admiration for the sweet singer of Israel, but I would rather not tackle him on an empty stomach. It is but right, too, that his sublime verses should be enunciated in a sympathetic tone of voice, for his muse is extremely varied, and runs through the whole range of human feeling. The fact that his observations, as many of our most esteemed commentators admit, are frequently of a plaintive, depressing, and ultra-biographical character, gives different degrees of value to different psalms. The ladies make no attempt at selection, but took everything in the psalter just as it came, and read every passage in the same undeviating tone of voice. All the guests kept yawning during this ordeal, and were wicked

enough to feel hurt at King David coming in between them and breakfast. Why is it that English people find it so hard to enjoy, or even tolerate, *any French translation of the Old Testament.* The polished, clear, pliant, and ultra-modern language of the boulevards, does not seem to have room and verge enough to take in the mysterious and inconsecutive grandeur of the Hebrew prophets. "You can't expect a Jew to write like Virgil," says the censorious Voltaire. True; nor can you expect a Frenchman to translate King David or Ezekiel satisfactorily. One might go further and say that French is not the ideal language for religious discourse. French suits the satirist far better than the preacher. My search has not been exhaustive, but of French religious orators, I have found but two that do not pall—Bossuet and Massillon. Such were the disjointed reflections I had time enough to indulge in at table, before breakfast, in the *châlet Brunot*, 3000 feet high among the mountains of Valais.

A LITERARY SHOEMAKER.

Gray, in his *Progress of Poesy*, gives an eloquent account of the spread of verse among all nations, even the poorest and most primitive. The spiritual and artistic elements of man make an effort to realise themselves, even under the most adverse conditions. It seems impossible to suppress bards, for they meet the need everywhere felt for emotional speech, thrilling portrayal, and the gratification of fancy. Ordinary people feel that the bard accomplishes for them what they cannot accomplish for themselves, and so hold him

in reverence. In this mountain village there was a shoemaker, whose reputation for learning was great and wide-spread. The natives were proud of him, and believed that he was quite qualified to go to Paris and take his seat among the forty immortals. He wrote curious little dialect poems on the life and "burning questions" of the mountains, and recited these with great effect to the peasants. I was told by those who were qualified to speak, that his verses had a tang of satire that was greatly relished. He was far happier clouting shoon in his lofty Alpine home there, than he would have been anywhere else, for he was the leading man in the locality, and his words were regarded as of equal weight with the priest's. Round his stall of an evening, the villagers would gather to hear his latest effusions. He had a far better knowledge of French than most of them, for he was a great reader. His favourite book was *Paul et Virginie*, whole chapters of which he could repeat from memory and in a pleasant vein (*memoriter et jucunde*). I bought from him, for a few coppers, a printed pamphlet on the book, and found it altogether diverting. In this pamphlet, which was full of unstinted praise for Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, the tuneful cobbler dropped into poetry at the most unexpected places. His French verse was highly original in structure, and showed a riotous disregard for all prosodic law. That charming idyll of the tropics had captured his affections so completely, that prose was inadequate to convey the full extent of his love.

Paul et Virginie is one of the world's books, and has given pleasure to young and old for more than a hun-

dred years. The great Napoleon liked it, almost as much as he did Ossian. There are not many French books so rich in vocabulary, so vivid in description, and so generally seductive. Critics are rather hard on the author sometimes; but it is possible that his very faults are part of his attraction to the unlettered. The Salvan cobbler could see no faults in Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. His enthusiasm tends to prove that it is not always the most erudite critics that extract the greatest amount of pleasure from a book.

PEASANT WOMEN.

I cannot (I am sorry to say) assert that the mountaineers of this part of Switzerland have an antipathy to dirt. They willingly tolerate uncleanness near their dwellings, and should you step over the threshold of a cottage, you may risk being rendered nearly powerless by heavy, stagnant, and noisome odours. I fear the interior air of many of the cots is seldom disturbed by the circulation of fresh currents from without. A great many of the women are deadly pale, which is not surprising to one who has had a sniff of the thick air they work and sleep in. I never saw such a contrast as that between the Alpine guide, Brunot, and his wife. *He* was a little, alert fellow, with muscles like iron, broad, smiling face, and flawless teeth; *she* was work-weary, anæmic, and drooping. His good condition was probably due to his trade, which kept him so much in the invigorating air of the heights. Her tasks were mostly done indoors, her family was large, and she never had

any holidays. Before the guide married her, she was a dweller in the valley below. He brought her up to his mountain home, and stationed her there for life. She had never been to Geneva or Lausanne, and the word *city* meant for her some indefinite multiple of Martigny, the only town she knew. An English lady showed her one day a copy of the *Illustrated London News*, containing portraits of fine society dames in court dresses. The poor woman's criticism was rather curious. "It is quite evident," she said, "that these rich ladies are not in the habit of looking for faggots in the wood, or carrying paniers of dung for the garden herbs."

There was one old woman, asthmatic, thin, and brown, who lived alone with her goat, in a little lane of wretched houses which some of the tourists facetiously called the *Boulevard des Italiens*. She made a few coppers by gathering the small berries called *mûres*, and selling these to the shops and *pensions* in the village. No moment of her life was unoccupied. She dibbled in her little strip of garden, knitted hose, picked berries, milked her goat, and prayed to the saints. One great pride solaced her life: *one of her sons was a priest.* On the topic of this son she never ran dry. He was the most gifted youth, she thought, that had ever gone down into the world from Salvan. She hoped and believed he would be a bishop some day. I am sure she fatigued heaven with prayers on his behalf. Many a poor Scotch mother is similarly delighted to tell how her son "nippit up his verbs" and gained bursaries in the divinity hall.

It is a common subject of remark among tourists that the Swiss women are not fair to look upon. In the mountain districts, certainly, good looks are rare, for the stress of life, the inclemency of the climate, and the coarse fare, do not make for beauty and delicate features. The Alpine peasant is quite pleased with a partner who can face hard work, and his sentiments are precisely those which Burns expressed in the well-known verse:

> "A bonnie lass, I will confess,
> Is pleasant to the e'e;
> But without some better qualities,
> She's no the lass for me."

In their youthful days the women look bright and fresh enough, and on Sundays, when they go to Church in their picturesque costumes, a photographer would regard them as fair game for his camera. I have been told that dancing is the favourite sport of young people in the Alpine villages, and that re-unions, for that purpose, are held mainly in taverns, the houses being too small to accommodate a sufficient company. Dancing is more popular in the Catholic than in the Protestant cantons. After marriage, life becomes serious for the Swiss women, and they must console themselves with the memory of their past merrymaking. They subside into household drudges, and wear out their years in a monotonous round of servile tasks. Is it mere chance that sends one woman into a palace, to be surrounded with luxury, and dooms another to a peasant's shed and to the carrying of faggots and *fumier*?

PICTURESQUE SIGHTS.

The miracles of colour with which Nature blesses our eyes at all hours of the day, are worthy of our utmost adoration and thanks. It is on the Alpine heights that one is most delighted with gracious tints and gleams, not merely from the flowers, that speckle the slopes with their myriad hues, but from the torrent on the hill, the clouds in the sky, and the dazzling snow that clothes *aiguille* and crest. Every one has heard of the *evening glow* that lies for a time on the summits of the high Alps at sunset, and changes their white to something approaching the colour of the rose. On an August evening, at the bend of a mountain road in Valais, you may see a score of gazers, all standing silent, in rapt admiration before that sublime and evanescent splendour. It cannot be very well described to one who has not seen it, though an artist, favoured with special powers, may catch it at the right moment, and lay it down on canvas as an aid to the memory of the eye. But the artist himself must drink in the fleeting vision without delay, and keep it secure in his soul till the time when his cunning hand has the opportunity of brush and paint, for the rich glow on the snowy fields above lasts but a few minutes, and when the sun's globe is fairly down behind the hills of the west, the sanguine glimmer glides away from the peaks, and gives place to a less rapturous and more sombre hue. Anon, the stars and moon come out above the ranges of snow, and throw silver gleams over the landscape of night. If there is any lake or watery surface on which the moon can cast

her light, so much the better for the observer. Let me remark that the *books of Ruskin* are by far the best for the purposes of those who wish to train themselves in the observation of Swiss scenery. His famous paragraph on Alpine Sunsets, in the first volume of *Modern Painters*, is worthy of being copied into every traveller's note-book. "Nature," says he, "has a thousand ways and means of rising above herself, but, incomparably, the noblest manifestation of her capability of colour, are in these sunsets among the high clouds. I speak especially of the moment before the sun sinks, when his light turns pure rose-colour, and when this light falls upon a zenith covered with countless cloud-forms of inconceivable delicacy, threads and flakes of vapour, which would, in common daylight, be pure snow-white, and which give, therefore, fair field to the tone of light. There is, then, no limit to the multitude, and no check to the intensity of the hues assumed."

The little village of Finshauts, which is not very far from Salvan, and on the road to Chamonix, is a place deservedly resorted to by lovers of the picturesque. By means of a telescope, it is possible to see, from the balcony of one's hotel, companies of guides and climbers, high up on the white flanks of the great mountain. Brave souls! I admire their intrepidity without desiring to emulate it. There is an immense glacier, too, within view, the *Glacier du Trient*, cold and grim looking, which I hope will always stay where it is.

Tœpffer, the author of *Nouvelles Genevoises* has written a great many tales of Switzerland that have pleasantly deceptive titles. One of his stories, *e.g.*, is

named *Le Col d'Anterne*, and when I began it, I thought that, in all likelihood, it would be full of physical geography and accurate descriptions of nature. The story is, on the contrary, crammed with humorous comments on the tourists. Tœpffer thus proves himself to be a wit and a philanthropist. Human beings are much more interesting than glaciers. It is well to look at the ice-fields and shudder to think of the devastation they cause; but some attention should also be paid to the human phenomena that pass along through the street of Finshauts: jovial Germans, brisk Americans, talkative French, and blameless Britons. The little shop of the village, which is full of souvenirs and pictorial cards, does good business with them all the summer.

ON A HIGH PASTURE.

About two thousand feet higher up than Salvan, by winding ways and pathways cruel on tender feet, one reaches an open and breezy summer-pasture, to which, in July, the herdsmen bring their cattle for change of air and grass. The men dwell in improvised wooden shanties of the most primitive kind, and the byres are so small that even the kine have to lower their horns to get inside to the stalls. Hercules, who, in ancient times, was called upon to cleanse the Augean stables, and who, to do so, needed the strong flood of the river Alpheus, would have been powerless before these Alpine byres. One look inside is enough, alike for eye and nose; but the cows are quite content to lie amid the stercoraceous ooze, and he, whose duty it is to milk the beasts, has no time to waste on purifying his hands with

soap and water. It is not an uncommon thing for parties of tourists to set out early in the morning to visit these upper pastures, where the cattle feed and the peasants are busy over the manufacture of cheese. A whole day is needed for such an outing, even when the starting-point is one of the high mountain hotels. For practised walkers, the journey up, through the invigorating air of morn, is magnificent. But when, nearer noon, the sun becomes a blazing terror, the light-coloured sunshades have to be opened, and progress is slower. When the pasture is reached, thirst is joyfully quenched with deep pitchers of milk, and no one criticises the foul hands of the donor. A sound sleep, at such a height, though in the neighbourhood of a miry cattle-stall, can be enjoyed, even by the most fastidious. When the sleeper awakes, he wishes more milk, more cheese, more bread and chocolate, and, after being satisfied, he dreams and drowses and smokes, and feels all the pleasures of mountain existence. He is conscious that he is happy, and his only regret is that he must start ere long on the return journey. It would be a blessing (he thinks) if he could stretch himself longitudinally, and let himself gently roll down the slopes to the place he came from. Looking round, he sees his fellows engaged in various occupations, suitable to the heart's desire of each: some sit with their bare feet in a burn, some are bribing the peasants to stop work and get photographed, some are picking wild-flowers, and some are busy with insects and butterflies. The thought may also strike him that he and his friends are probably regarded as very eccentric fellows by these

mountain herdsmen, *and that such a judgment would, on the whole, be well-grounded.* Some hours later, when he has descended to his hotel, and looked at his fiery-red face in a mirror, he is surprised to see the manner of man he has become. It will be some weeks before the effects of the sun depart from the skin of his face and back.

I have always (such is the power of school text-books) associated the Alps with Schiller's play of *William Tell.* In the first scene of that great play, the stage direction states that "the Ranz des Vaches and the tinkling of cattle bells continue for some time after the rising of the curtain, and that on the mountain a herdsman is heard singing:

"Ihr Matten, lebt wohl!
Ihr Sonnigen Weiden!
Der Senne muss scheiden
Der Sommer ist hin;
Wir fahren zu Berg, wir kommen wieder,
Wenn der Kuckuck ruft, wenn erwachen die Lieder,
Wenn mit Blumen die Erde sich kleidet neu
Wenn die Brünnlein fliessen im lieblichen Mai."

Schiller cast a romance over the Alpine herdsmen that hardly survives a visit to their haunts. It is impossible to forget the uncleanness, the comfortless habitations, and the monotonous work of their life *là-haut.* They never take off their clothes; they sleep on a litter of straw; and they are exposed to the most sudden and dangerous changes of weather. Yet, with ineradicable spirit, they persist in singing songs *in praise of* their occupation, their cow-bells, their

mountain freedom, and their sweet native land. They undoubtedly look hardy enough in spite of their poverty and hard life—the reason, no doubt, being that nature kills off the weaklings.

A MOUNTAIN GORGE.

On the plain, dominated by the mountain on which Salvan is perched, there is a road which cuts through green fields to a great rent in the face of the cliff. The water that tumbles roughly down the mountain, had to find a way to the plain, and this great gorge is the result of slow centuries of patient erosion. So say the geologists, but the mind recoils at the thought of a task so ineffably tedious. The *Gorge of Trient*, for that is the name of the glacier-bitten chasm, has become a place of show for tourists. Attached by strong clamps to the rocks, there is a wooden stair, leading up for a good half-mile inside the lofty gully, through which the downward-rushing torrent proceeds. The roar is deafening, and the spray dashes up on the rungs of the stair and on the gay robes of the ladies who look down from the gangway at the tumult of water below. Southey has told us how the water comes down at Lonore, and his description holds good for the *Gorges du Trient*. No conversation, of a satisfying kind, can be carried on in this noisy chasm, for the bawling of human beings is rendered nugatory by the din of the flood and the multiplying echoes of the rock. Should the stair-way break? Or the rail of it on which the gazer leans, play him false by snapping? In such a

case, the fight for life would be short indeed, for the torrent is forty feet deep in places, and the rocky corners, round which the water swirls in anger, are sharp and jagged. Such thoughts bring a mist before the eye, and lead most people to be content with less than the whole ascent.

Vernayaz, the little village near the gorge, has become famous owing to the proximity. There is a railway-station at the place, and the trains are so timed that the intervals may be adequate for a comfortable sight of the rocks and water. The plain, in which the village is situated, is green and pleasing, and there are great numbers of tall and elegant poplar trees by the road-side. The plain seems entirely shut in by mountains, but the train gets out somehow, by turning corners and dodging difficulties. I have been more than once to Vernayaz, and it is associated in my mind with brilliant sunshine and strong wind. In Britain, a fierce and searching wind usually brings clouds with it, and the sun is blotted out in no long time. But in this valley, I have observed that the wind may blow and the poplars toss their plumage wildly for a long summer day, with never a fleck of cloud to vary the blue dazzle of the sky. One might imagine that the story of the "Wind and Sun," of which Æsop speaks in his famous fable, was being falsified here, for though *both* do their utmost, not time about but simultaneously, the traveller persists in keeping on his coat.

The water, which behaves in such a furious manner when the narrowing rocks huddle its motion, subsides

into a quiet enough burn when it reaches the green level of the village. The reader must perceive at once that the poet, whose delight is in morals and comparisons, has a chance here. Talking of Nature's fury, a Swiss poet writes appositely thus—in the visitor's book of a hotel:

> "Mais bientôt il s'apaise, et toute la nature,
> De tous ces grands efforts sentant la vanité,
> Reprend sa confiance et sa sérénité;
> Bientôt les grandes voix ne sont plus qu'un murmure,
> Qui décline et qui meurt; le bruit des grandes eaux,
> Devient une harmonie, une voix tendre et pure."

Revolutions in a State result in a time of peace, and the same ought to be true of mental disquiet:

> "Qui commence en tumulte et s'achève en prière."

Who are you, Monsieur le poète, author of these beautiful lines, brother in affliction, who can find a moral in winds and a sermon in a roaring linn? I fear it argues myself unknown, not to know more about you. You have found peace and seen the light, since the last line of your poem portrays you in an attitude of thankfulness. I wish I had met you in the *Hôtel du Gorge* at Vernayaz, and had lunch with you. Perhaps it was you that I saw sitting, on the lee-side of a cliff, with pencil and notebook, engaged in the throes of composition. Long may you write verses on the beauties of your native land, and, like a true Swiss, never fail to draw the appropriate moral! Your poems are worthy of a better fate than insertion in an inn-album.

THE SWISS DIALECTS.

Anyone in search of a life-work, and possessed of leisure and broad-based financial stability, might do worse than take up the study of the Swiss dialects. He might devote ten years, say, to wandering from valley to valley, filling his note-book with odd words and phrases, and then stay at home for two years to codify his results. The final stage would be to issue, at his own expense, a large volume of 1500 pages, full of glossaries and variant forms. The occupation would be a glorious one, bringing perfect peace to the investigator, and harming nobody. Switzerland is a specially fine recreation-ground for the philologist, because three great languages, like three great webs (if I may say so with respect), meet here, and become tied up, as it were, in a number of confused knots. These languages are French, German, and Italian. The official grammarians of these tongues are not satisfied with the manner in which the Swiss speak them, but the Germans are the most tolerant. The very anomalies of Swiss German are prized by certain philologists, who have been known to bring phonographs to the valleys with the object of getting old people to sing dialect ditties down into the resonant tubes. How interesting it is, as a man crosses from one canton into another, to reflect that he carries away with him a bundle of illustrative spoil, that does not impoverish those from whom it has been taken! In his study, by and by, he can comfortably refresh his memory and aid his composition by putting on whatever records he requires. Roughly speaking, 72 per

cent. of the Swiss population speak a form of German, 22 per cent. aim at French, 5 per cent. may be referred to as Italians, and 1 per cent. use a form of Romansch called Ladin. In some parts of the Grisons, every village has its own patois. Time, and better communication may ultimately (as has happened in Scotland) wipe out many of the linguistic differences. Did not James I. say to his English courtiers that "in auld Scotland there was a town called Nairn, in which the inhabitants at one end could not understand the speech of those who lived at the other." The remarks of the royal joker might be applied to certain of the outlying Swiss cantons. There is something saddening in the aspect of a peasant, who stands before you with no means of communication save some paltry and most circumscribed patois, that holds good only within the radius of a few miles. The Swiss authorities, while showing an extreme tenderness to what is old, picturesque, and local, make determined efforts to have every citizen equipped with the knowledge of some of the great literary tongues. But patois will never quite decay so long as the means of moving about are scanty and difficult. The peasants are quite pleased with the primitive life of their ancestral valleys, and though they may be taught at school to read in French or German or Italian, they never, among themselves, give up the use of the home dialect. Salvan, *e.g.*, is in French Switzerland, and is quite near a main line of railway, yet the natives do not feel at ease when they are spoken to in book-French. I heard a Frenchman, from Lyons, endeavouring to carry on a conversation with two old

men of that village. He spoke slowly to them, and repeated the idea of every sentence in several different forms. They probably understood him fairly well, but they had no fluency in replying to his questions. A patient study of the dialects of any portion of Switzerland would, I am sure, be well rewarded. It was no small surprise to me to be told that the word *cruisie*, which is Lowland Scotch for "a small oil-lamp," is used in that sense in the cantons of Vaud and Valais. Words from many a source meet in the patois of Switzerland, and no wonder. The Rhaeti and the Helvetii, whom Cæsar knew; the Roman legionaries, who occupied the country during the Empire; and the Alamanni and Burgundians, who over-ran the valleys in mediæval times, have all left their mark on the blood and speech of the cantons.

DRAWBACKS.

The amenities of the Swiss mountains are numerous, but regard for truth impels me to mention one or two drawbacks of a minor character. As thick mists frequently go heaving and surging along the cliffs and heights, and as the precipices are not invariably protected by railings, you may, if preoccupied or unwary, step into abysmal vacancy, without intending it, and entirely frustrate the object of your journey. When there are any philosophical dreamers in the company, they should be sharply watched during a time of fog. Then again, among the loose stones of the bouldered hill-sides (especially in those parts that are smitten most strongly by the sun) and in tangled forest glades, where

each pedestrian has to make his own pathway, there reside far too many venomous snakes and adders. The impropriety of stepping upon any of these noxious pests must be self-evident to every normal intelligence. As Shakespeare puts it:

> "It is the bright day that brings forth the adder,
> And that craves wary watching."

I must say that I never actually saw any noxious reptile myself, but the fact that they exist in abundance (as the natives avouch), kept me from being absolutely at heart's-ease in the ferny woods at the hot noon-tide. Another inconvenience, of a less alarming kind than mist-veiled steep or stinging adder, is the buzz of the mosquito, that makes his onset, by preference, in the darkness. After enduring his outrages, you feel no desire to get your portrait taken. I have seen children rather badly disfigured by these tiny pests. Mosquito curtains are to be had in most of the high Alpine boarding-houses. I have nothing whatever to say on the dangers of mountain-climbing in the *highest* altitudes, in the company of guides. I am content to enjoy the raptures of the Alpinist, at second hand, in the admirable books of M. Rod. *L'Alpe homicide* claims far too many victims every year.

A MOUNTAIN PRIEST AND OTHERS.

It is worth while making a stay among the hills of Valais, if only to see *la candeur, le courage et les vertus champêtres.* The tourist comes and goes, Baedeker in hand, but makes small impression on the peasantry.

They live through the unvaried life their fathers and mothers did, and the priest comes in at all the important crises. The Valais hill-folk are, with few exceptions, Catholic. Who would attempt to convert them? It would be rather regrettable, unless the thing could be done *en masse*. The Catholic ritual and symbolism are so eminently suited to the simple-minded folk, and those zealous priests (*good men of religioun*, as Chaucer says), who labour in the valleys, are excellent, pious, self-sacrificing teachers, who manage to touch the dull lives of their flock with some of the light from on high. The Salvan priest is the best of comforters, and I had pleasure in taking off my hat and doing him reverence many a time, as he passed on his missions of mercy.

A well-meaning English gentleman, who had been for twenty years associated with missionary workers in the port of Marseilles, and who spoke French as fluently as English, came to a Valais village for a holiday, during my residence in the neighbourhood. He was a noble and zealous fellow, on fire with sacred enthusiasms. Like our revival preachers at home, he never for a moment forgot his mission, which was to preach the Gospel (as he conceived it) to every creature he met. I admired him as I would a king among men; for he had found a key to the universe, a solution which reduced all the puzzling irregularities of the world into the most delightful cosmos. It is with regret that I have to express a conviction that he was deficient in tact. To preach evangelical Protestantism in a district that is exclusively Catholic, is, in my opinion, a matter of

doubtful taste. He had an answer ready, and many will, no doubt, regard it as a very good one: "*Taste*, indeed! that is a very flimsy objection. St. Paul, I suppose, showed very bad taste in preaching to the Ephesians and the Galatians. The poor folk on this mountain are grovelling in superstition, and I must try to enlighten them in the interests of their welfare here and beyond. There is only one way of procuring peace for either Protestant or Catholic, and that way is indicated in the Gospel according to St. John, third chapter and sixteenth verse." "I am with you," I said, "up to a certain point. I believe that our Protestantism is a purer and more advanced form of Christianity than the Catholicism of *this canton*—at any rate it suits you and me better; but I am not so sure that the mountaineers of Valais are quite ready for your doctrines, or even that what you say would convey very much meaning to them. Their mentality is quite different from yours. A convert to Protestantism here would be an outcast and a pariah at once." I did not expect him to desist from his efforts: his convictions were too strong and his motives too high for that. He continued to distribute his tracts at all hours of the day, and to speak to all the natives he met on the great subjects he had so much at heart. I saw him one morning, with a dozen children round him, singing Sankey's hymns in French to them. It struck me as most incongruous and droll, to hear the airs of *Hold the Fort* and *Pull for the Shore*, sung to French words. As I had expected, the priest got wind of the campaign, and furiously denounced it from the pulpit. Thereafter, everyone refused to accept the

tracts, and the youngsters took to their heels when they saw the preacher. Our friend devoted himself, in future, to the tourists, who, indeed, stood more in need of his ministrations.

The reader will not, I am sure, think any the less of the Protestantism of Wordsworth, after reading the following verses he composed in one of the Catholic cantons of Switzerland:

"Doomed as we are, our native dust
To wet with many a bitter shower,
It ill befits us to disdain
The altar, to deride the fane,
Where patient sufferers bend, in trust,
To win a happier hour.

I love where spreads the village lawn,
Upon some knee-worn cell to gaze:
Hail to the firm, unmoving cross
Aloft, where pines their branches toss,
And to the chapel, far withdrawn,
That lurks by lonely ways!

Where'er we roam, along the brink
Of Rhine, or by the sweeping Po,
Through Alpine vale, or champain wide;
Whate'er we look on, at our side
Be Charity—to bid us think
And feel, if we would know."

A SWISS LEGEND.

I shall take leave of this interesting subject by recounting a legendary tale, appropriate enough to the occasion, which I heard from a Genevese visitor to the mountains, and which, undoubtedly, carries with it an

edifying moral. The tale is of the nature of a parable, and no attempt should be made to date it with precision. Dates must get the go-by when moral lessons have to be drawn.

Once upon a time, in a remote valley of Switzerland, there was a community of Christians torn in pieces by all kinds of dissension. The pacific spirit of their creed, such as the original apostolic pioneers had instilled, was no longer very apparent among them. The *letter* of the gospel was insisted on far too much, and *grace*, in consequence, was sadly lacking. A deplorable state of affairs resulted, which God, in His mercy, was pleased to terminate, by sending a teacher to show them anew that love and grace must always be first, and that doctrinal purity, however desirable, is of no great use without the sauce of charity. The message was well received by the natives, who recognised that they had been going clean against the precepts of the Divine Master. A wonderful change came over the valley, which became like a little Heaven below. The natives did actually strive to bear one another's burdens, and each esteemed his neighbour better than himself—difficult as such an attitude invariably is. It is in small Alpine communities, where there is no escape from the proximity either of enemies or friends, that hate is most devastating and charity most charming in its results. Such peace and brotherhood came to exist in this isolated glen, such a tone of devoutness inspired not merely the prayers, but also the material actions of the people, that the Devil became alarmed, and regarded the piety of the place as a direct challenge to his powers.

From long experience in the art of temptation, he knows, but too well, the weak spots of the human heart. One of his commonest and, it is painful to add, his most successful wiles for unchristianising people, is to stir them up to argue about trifles. If such trifles *seem* to have a bearing on religion, so much the better for his infernal purposes. Taking upon himself a human form, Satan hied to this valley where righteousness reigned, walked about from place to place, talked to the people, and even, under various pretexts, introduced himself into their dwellings. To some he said, "The garment, without seam, which Christ wore in this world, was *white* in colour." To others he declared that it was *blue*. He spent but one day in the valley, rightly deeming that that was enough. The seeds of dissension being thus insidiously sown, he went joyfully away to neutralise elsewhere the intentions of Eternal Love.

His visit had, for immediate effect, a recrudescence of war and schism among the mountaineers. They forgot the Divine command which says, "love one another even as I have loved you." They relinquished their former holy strugglings against vice, ignorance, selfishness, pride, and idolatry. Their whole time was spent in heated discussions regarding the colour of the Redeemer's seamless mantle. The Whites condemned the opinions of the Blues, and the Blues retorted by anathematising the Whites. So busy were they in the work of reviling and excommunicating one another, that they did not hear the noise of the invader at the rocky gateways of their high valley. The cruel Turks had arrived even thus far into the bowels of Christendom. I neither

affirm nor deny that these pagan Mussulmans were the special instruments of the Divine Vengeance. I merely say that the people of the valley, who were in the middle of a dispute and would not stop, were cut down to a man. While the scimitars of the unbeliever were flashing to smite them, the foolish zealots kept calling *It was white*, or *It was blue*, according as they had taken the one or the other view. Never had the Turks such an easy prey, and never, as the legend affirms, did they encounter victims who met death with such strange and enigmatic words.

The story might be written in a form that would make it suitable for insertion in a modern newspaper. Really, the miraculous element could be eliminated without doing the slightest damage to the moral. It is not at all unlikely, therefore, that the story may have a historical basis—but tradition does not give exact details respecting the locality.

CHAPTER VI.

SUPPLEMENTARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE FRENCH PEOPLE AND LANGUAGE.

A Provincial in Paris—Policemen and criminals—The Déclassés—The influence of the Saints in Paris and the Provinces.

Some general features—Too many civil servants: a story—Officialdom and satire—Attitude to Germany.

The French and German languages—Excellence of epistolary literature in France—*Le mot de la situation*—The Academic discourse—Borrowings from English—*Thou and thee.*

Educational: A lively book of idioms—How to learn a foreign language—Jacotot's method—The pleasantest way—Letter from an Englishman in Paris.

Envoi: As others see us.

In this final chapter we are back again in the heart of France, and, ere going home, may indulge in a few supplementary observations and illustrative anecdotes.

It is to be wished that every British tourist in France would imitate to some degree the genial manners and lively style of King Edward VII., our late diplomatic sovereign. King Edward took a keen and courteous interest in every phase of Parisian life. He had a smile and a suitable greeting for all who doffed their caps to him. You might hear a workman say

sometimes to his fellow: "Edward has just passed; he returned my salute; *c'est une bonne pâte d'homme, allez.*" It is a fact that King Edward's great popularity in France was due to his winsome good-nature and *bonhomie. It is an excellent principle to go upon, that the great majority of men are worth speaking to.* But we must, of course, be careful not to look upon our fellow-passengers to eternity with an unsympathetic curiosity. Curiosity, untinctured with brotherly kindness, is a bad form of incivility, and is deservedly resented by all.

Before making a few general remarks on the French people and their language, I desire to give special instances of (i.) the provincial in the capital; (ii.) policemen and *déclassés;* and (iii.) the wide-spread influence of the saints, both in Paris and the provinces. These three important subjects lend themselves well to anecdotic illustration.

A PROVINCIAL IN PARIS.

I used to be a frequent passenger on the tramway to Passy and Auteuil, and came to be on talking terms with the conductor, who was *a big, brawny Savoyard,* an absolute lump of good-nature. Annecy was his native town, which, as everyone knows, was also the birth-place of St. Francis of Sales, the apostle of gentleness. When I read or hear of the works of that most lovable saint, I always think of this tram-conductor, who was both gentle and gentlemanly. His wife, her mother and himself all stayed in the one house, and the special joy of his life was his little boy of three. When the

time came for his evening relief from duty, the big fellow was full of glee, and hastened home to have some hours' romping with the youngster. One evening, as it happened, towards the end of the journey, I was the only passenger, and had the pleasure of listening to his tales of the child's wonderful feats. He showed me a photograph of the boy, which he carried about in his pocket, and was immensely flattered by the fact that an unbiased outsider like myself was able at once to see a resemblance between father and offspring. I had also the good luck early one forenoon to see mother and child in the car. The father's elation was both comic and pathetic. He stood, wreathed in smiles, on the footboard of the tram, and kept nodding continually to the three-year-old at the mother's side. The child was dressed, I thought, with special care and elegance, and looked most absurdly like the father. The mother was kept busy preventing the little chap from running off to clutch and entangle the father's legs. Everybody in the car was entertained by the spectacle, and the ladies whispered to each other with a smile, *C'est bien gentil, n'est-ce pas?* or *C'est un brave homme que celui-là*, or *C'est tordant*, etc. The father looked as if he wished to make a speech of thanks to the company for their kindness in taking notice of his *bambin*. When mother and child left the car, everyone looked out after them, and the conductor enjoyed a triumph. One or two of the ladies put questions to him regarding the child's age and health, and gave a good deal of expert advice on these topics. One touch of nature makes the whole world kin. The scene of human affection on this car

put all the spectators in good humour for the rest of the day.

The last time I saw the Savoyard, he informed me that he was leaving for his province: his father had died, and the paternal acres had to be tilled. He was both sorry and glad, he said, *sorry* because he liked going up and down the streets of Paris in his car, and giving *correspondance* tickets to so many polite foreigners (I took off my hat in recognition of this delicate compliment), and *glad* because he thought his boy's health would be more flourishing in the fresh air of High Savoy. It is a long way from the Seine to the Arve, from Auteuil to Annecy. When the conductor was speaking, my mind went back to the sight of that river, the Arve, which flows through the whole length of Savoy from the icy roots of Mount Blanc to the resplendent Lake of Geneva. A furious, muddy current that foams through many a gorge and bears lumps of clashing ice on its surface! "If Monsieur should ever, by any chance, be in the neighbourhood of Annecy, for MM. *les étrangers*, it is well known, travel far and wide, I shall be desolated if he does not visit me." *Poignées de main!*

POLICEMEN AND CRIMINALS.

Max O'Rell was rather fond of saying that the English were like the ancient Romans, but that his fellow-countrymen, the French, were more akin to the Greeks. The French are intellectually brilliant enough to be likened to the Greeks, and I think it may be admitted that the British, in their genius for organising

and governing a world-wide empire, are in no respect inferior to the Romans. It is pleasant to pay deserved compliments to both nations. Call me a Roman and I shall call you a Greek: in future, we shall both try to live up to our august nomenclature.

It is hard for every Frenchman to be so Hellenic of wit as *M. Lebrun, inspector of police.* His feats are worthy to rank with some of the astute dodges recorded by Homer of that typical Greek, Ulysses. Let me record one of these feats, and say, in introducing it, that the Athenians of Paris enjoy, above all things, just such a story as I am about to tell.

The scene of M. Lebrun's triumph was that most beautiful of Parisian bridges, the *pont Alexandre III.*, named after the hapless Czar whose fate we all know. The bridge is broad, built of solid, artistic masonry, and glorious to behold. Its gilded lamps, its statues, and the fine views of Paris to be seen on both sides, make it a resort of visitors to the city. One rarely crosses the bridge without being asked, by some vendor or other, to purchase a guide-book, a plan of Paris, or a set of worthless pictorial souvenirs. There are two species of vendors: those who are honest and wish you to buy, and those who are really pickpockets and seek to pilfer your watch or purse. In the spring of 1910, complaints were constantly coming in to police headquarters regarding the depredations committed on tourists and provincials by rogues who operated on the *pont Alexandre III.*, and made it, in the memory of their victims, a veritable "bridge of sighs." There are many pathetic sights in this world, but there are not

many *more* pathetic than that of the tourist whose pocket-book (containing all his money and his return-ticket home) has been surreptitiously snatched from him by a heartless street-thief. Affected by the many stories that were from time to time reported to him, M. Lebrun determined to clear the bridge of the predatory vermin that infested it. His scheme made it necessary for him to take his wife out for a walk.

The two dressed themselves up like simple country people who had come into the capital for a day or two's sight-seeing. They lounged, sauntered, and yawned, in the true style of provincials out for pleasure. Madame took a special interest in looking at the river and observing the little passenger-steamers shooting under the arches of the bridge. Monsieur gazed at the statues as if he had never seen them before, and looked frequently at his watch, too. So completely was the intellectual detective concealed under the bucolic disguise that two varlets, marking the couple as an easy prey, came thrusting post-cards on their notice. The inspector pretended to look at these post-cards, which contained views of the *Sacre-Cœur* and other famous churches of Paris. Suddenly he noticed that one of the supposed vendors was cutting the cords of Madame's reticule. With one swift bound, mastiff-like, Lebrun laid the culprit low, snatched the stolen reticule and extracted *therefrom* a superb pair of handcuffs, which, in the twinkling of an eye, were made to encircle the rascal's wrists. (Parenthetically I take leave to observe that it was a master-stroke of ingenious humour to make a thief steal a pair of handcuffs intended to be of

use in his own capture.) Never was criminal so utterly crest-fallen and stunned: he let himself be conducted to the lock-up with that dreamy docility that comes of intellectual paralysis, muttering to himself again and again, *je me suis fait pincer tout bêtement.* I am happy to say that this one arrest led to five others, and to a healthy consternation among the Parisian pickpockets.

THE DÉCLASSÉS.

The criminal classes of Paris are believed to be largely recruited from the *déclassés.*

There is much said in France at the present time of these *déclassés*, a species of young men whom the schools have educated well enough but who find it impossible to make a living. They are too good to be peasants, and yet find it difficult to make headway in the over-crowded professions. Regarding such youths, you hear it sometimes said, "These young fellows have been ruined by education; far better for them if they had been as illiterate as the peasants of old, their ancestors. Good honest labour on the land is useful and health-giving, but these lads are suited for neither country nor town." It is a fact that the bands of cruel scoundrels who, when night darkens the streets, come forth, with knife and revolver, to prey on the unwary in certain of the *boulevards extérieurs*, are being constantly reinforced from the well-educated youth for whom society can find no honest and genteel employment. The existence of such a class is a clear indication that modern society is in a disordered state, and that compulsory education, which raises ambitions that cannot always be satisfied,

is by no means an unmixed boon. In the early period of life, the Republican authorities take hold of the child and force him to go to school. What sublime teaching he gets there! He is constantly being told that knowledge is power, that the Revolution of 1789 destroyed all privilege, that men are equal before the law, that intellect and education are the sole determining factors of success. But when the young man, indoctrinated in these grand notions, goes forth into the world, he finds that his teachers have grievously deceived him. A big barrier of privilege, almost as formidable as anything erected by the old aristocracy, obstructs his advance. Boys, whom he surpassed at school-work, easily shoot ahead of him because their parents have influence. He finds that intellect is not everything, that men do not start the race of life on equal terms, that base intrigue is often of more avail than brains, and that, in sum, as a great Englishman has said,

"Slow rises worth, by poverty depressed."

Many impatient geniuses find the rise far too slow and, in despair, they cast aside all shame and morality and make war on society, which they consider has treated them ill. In other words, they become criminals, and after a more or less lengthy struggle, they are cut down by the strong arm of the law.

The impatience that leads so many young men astray is often a legitimate impatience. If the State insists on boys being educated to a pitch that makes them dissatisfied with humble work, there is a cruelty in letting

them loose on the world and showing indifference to their future save when they come into collision with M. Lebrun. The object of education is to equip a lad to co-operate usefully in the work of the world. It is not enough to drill a boy in the lore of books. State-compulsion, if it begins at all, should be systematic, consistent, and continuous. It is of more importance that a boy should be taught a trade than that he should know some of the fancy subjects of the modern school-programme, and it is of far greater importance that when his trade is learned, he should have some reasonable assurance of work and pay. It is not logical that the State should begin by being paternal and end in that utter indifference which begets anarchy.

"The fault of modern times," says an acute observer, "is not that there is too much education in France, but that there is too little of the right sort. The best proof that education is not practical enough is that so many whose education is supposed to be finished are useless to society. The schools turn out young men who are unwilling to attain success by the slow drudgery of unobtrusive toil. They wish occupations that will free them from labouring with their hands. As about eighty per cent. of the grown men in any country must be labourers and tradesmen, it seems reasonable that the teachers of the young should lay constant stress on the dignity and honour that attach to labour, the value to the fatherland of hard work on the farm and in the workshop, the folly and melancholy associated with a life of luxurious ease, and the criminality of eating without working. Modern education is undoubtedly

deficient on the score of morals. The fostering of emulation in school, the giving of prizes and such like, have an immoral tendency, inasmuch as they stir up envy and ambition, the two great foes of human happiness. It would be far more humane to endeavour to stifle emulation as much as possible and endeavour to inculcate in the young a spirit of content. It may be said that emulation is the watchword of the world and that as the school is a preparation for the world, scholars should be set to rival and outdo each other every day of their lives. Such counsel is educationally wrong, and takes no account of the undoubted fact that the ability of human beings is strictly limited by nature and cannot be improved by bad motives."

THE INFLUENCE OF THE SAINTS.

The *déclassés*, though much spoken of, by reason of their misdeeds, are after all a small part of the population. The great bulk of the nation has a belief in morality and a certain reverence for the saints. It is possible that a smile of incredulity may appear on the face of many at my alluding to the saints at all. Nevertheless, religion is still a highly important factor in French life, both in Paris and the provinces; and the *saints have at least as much influence as the deputies* on the actions of the nation. The following stories, one from Paris and the other from Brittany, are apposite.

A sad-looking, middle-aged lady, was for some months a boarder in Auteuil when I stayed there, and everyone spoke well of her, for her manners were gentle

and distinguished. A great deal of her time was passed over devout Catholic treatises which she read under the shadow of a tree in an elevated part of the garden. A small, Skye terrier, on which she bestowed great affection and caresses, was always at her feet. The dog, being of British breed, was called *Love*, a name which the lady, who was a Parisian, pronounced as if it were *Loaf*. Our landlady was not at all averse to tell others (in confidence of course) all she knew of this lady. "*Elle a eu du chagrin.* She has had a great deal of worry and trouble in her household. Her husband began by neglecting her, and now he has left her altogether. He is rich and he is frivolous, and at the present moment, while she sits here reading the most edifying of literature, he rejoices in his liberty and goes whirling round France in a motor; and (what is worse), *he is not alone.*" The lady was extremely pleasant at table, but certainly looked as if she were weighed down by some calamity. I am sure her religion was her great consolation. Perhaps, indeed, she had been somewhat too devout for her husband's taste. She went daily to the church, lived a most exemplary life, and wared all her surplus affection on the terrier. *One day the dog went amissing.* At this point of my narrative it is incumbent on me to refer to *Saint Anthony of Padua*, who is one of the most charming of saints and cannot well be overpraised. We know very little of him in Great Britain, to our shame be it spoken. The life of Saint Anthony, which terminated in 1231, was in every way admirable. His heart was full of love for all animate nature, and, when in the

course of his missionary travels, he was refused a hearing by men, he went down to the beach of the sea, and, out of the touching simplicity of his soul, began to preach to the fishes. Great painters like Murillo and Raphael have beautifully idealised on immortal canvas the idyllic legends that have gathered round the name of this attractive saint. One must live in a Catholic country to know the full extent of Saint Anthony's influence. He has not only a special kindness for dumb animals; he has taken upon himself the further duty of disclosing to those who pray to him in the right spirit, the whereabouts of any article they may have lost or mislaid. A most useful function, this last, and one which the good saint is often called upon to exercise! Let a visitor to a French cathedral take note of Saint Anthony's shrine: he will seldom see it without candles —the offerings of some suppliant whose request has been granted. I have observed that the printed form of prayer to Saint Anthony, which is placed near the shrine, is often so well thumbed as to be almost illegible. On one occasion I heard a priest declaim, with pardonable heat, against the folly of Catholics tampering with necromancy, palmistry, crystal-gazing, card-shuffling, and such-like rubbish. "Have we not," he said, "the benign Saint Anthony to appeal to, when we are in difficulties?" The lady to whom I referred at the beginning of this paragraph, being a good Catholic and a highly-educated woman, went straight to Saint Anthony's shrine and prayed that she might recover her dog. She appealed to the saint in his twofold capacity, first as restorer of things lost; and second, as

patron of animals. The answer to her prayer was so complete as almost to savour of miracle. When she returned to her seat in the garden, she found her husband sitting there with the dog on his knee. Two *Loves* restored at one stroke! The husband was penitent, and had come, in his motor, to entreat his wife's forgiveness, and ask her to return home. He had recognised her dog as it was straying in a neighbouring street. After such a story, who would dare to speak lightly of Saint Anthony?

The story from the provinces is equally cogent and impressive.

Renan told the story one night to his friend, M. Jules Lemaître, and the latter, by his dazzling style, gave additional vogue to its sublime incidents. It is a Breton legend about John the Baptist. In the west of Brittany (look your Baedeker for the locality), about ten miles from Morlaix, there is a little place called St.-Jean-du-doigt, the church of which contains a finger of St. John in a gold and silver enamelled casket of the fifteenth century. The finger is the index one of the right hand—the forefinger, in sum, that pointed out the Redeemer of mankind to the crowds that assembled on the banks of the Jordan. It is true that a few stupid, poking antiquarians have discovered traces of a Roman aqueduct in the place, and will have it that *doigt* does not mean "finger" at all, but *duct*, or aqueduct. A Christian (as M. Lemaître sensibly puts it) must always exercise piety even in the domain of etymology, and choose that derivation from which the greatest amount of spiritual comfort can be extracted.

The priests of St.-Jean-du-doigt, who tell the legend in almost the same form as the excellent M. Lemaître, laugh heartily at the antiquarians and rule them entirely out of court.

In the fifteenth century, as the pious legends tell, this holy finger, which the priests had enshrined in a golden casket, performed, *daily*, cures of the most astounding kind. It is true that even at the present day, when faith is not so strong as it was then, cures are still *occasionally* heard of; but in those old pious times people were cured by the hundred. The saint always had an especial delight in doing a service to the poor. He acted, if I may say so, rather disdainfully towards the rich, and was far less kind to the prince than to the peasant. Such conduct was quite in keeping with the character ascribed to him in the third chapter of St. Matthew, where he is represented as dealing harshly with the Scribes and Pharisees, calling them a generation of vipers and asking, with magnificent irony, who had warned *them* to flee from the wrath to come. There was, to our idea, perhaps, a taint of rudeness in this: but what special refinements of a worldly sort could be expected from a saint who lived in the desert, fed on locusts and wild honey, and dressed himself, not in purple and fine linen, but in a raiment of camel-skin, and with a leathern girdle about his loins? Those who came to his relic at the church of St. John in Brittany were, if poor, attended to at once; if rich, they were kept waiting.

You have heard doubtless of the famous duchess, Anne of Brittany, who in her day was the wife of two

kings, Charles VIII. and Louis XII. She was a lady of immense wealth and influence in the fifteenth century, and lived in a grand castle, surrounded by pomp, luxury, and adulation. But in the height of her glory, she fell ill with a painful and malignant ulcer, and no doctor (even of those brought from the greatest distance and at the greatest cost) was competent to grapple with the disease. Happening one day to hear mention made of the miraculous cures performed by the finger of St. John, she said, "Go and bring the relic *here to me* in my castle. If the saint cures me, I shall give ten thousand gold crowns to be distributed among the poor, and another ten thousand to the saint himself for the embellishment of his sanctuary." *Such a speech showed an utter ignorance of the character of the great Forerunner.*

The priests, in charge of the shrine, could not choose but obey the command of the duchess. The sacred finger in its golden casket was devoutly borne along the road towards the castle by a company of monks, who sang holy hymns as they paced along. Great crowds of people followed the procession, and it was observed that the trees of the highway bent low, out of homage, at the passing of the relic. So far, so good! But after a few hours the trees *ceased* to do obeisance, and the monks, overcome by a sudden and invincible fatigue, could not move a step further. On an examination of the casket, it was found that the finger had fled. The priests, on returning to the church, were surprised to find that the finger had arrived before them. The saint would have nothing to do with

castles. It was his evident intention to force the great lady *to come to him.*

She conquered her pride so far as to go in person to the church. Rustling in silks, gleaming with jewellery, and attended with a host of maids and pages, she went up to the sacred relic, kissed it in a haughty and supercilious way (as if she were paying the saint a compliment), and expected an instantaneous cure. But no cure came to her, and she returned disappointed to her boudoir.

A lady whose slightest word was law to those about her, did not relish such snubbing, even from a saint. It added to her exasperation to be told of more and more miracles that St. John was working on *vile lepers and lame beggars*—the very offscourings of the country-side. The duchess, be it said, was a woman of spirit, and at last decided to do works of piety in such an ostentatious way that the saint (as she thought) could not have it in his heart to neglect them. Firstly, she ordered three hundred wax candles to be burned before the casket containing the saint's finger; secondly, she made payment in advance of the ten thousand crowns she had promised to the poor; thirdly, she vowed to make one of her daughters a nun; and fourthly, she wrote to the judges who were engaged in the trial of a heretic, telling them to *stop the trial and burn the culprit without delay.* Yet, in spite of these signal deeds of righteousness, the saint afforded her no relief, and her ulcer became daily more agonising.

It was a humble and virtuous old priest who put her at last on the right track. "Do not think, my lady,"

he said, "that you will ever dazzle St. John with your jewels and your trinkets. He is, with reverence be it spoken, a rugged and austere prophet and no respecter of persons. *We* know him of old, and can tell you that he is not to be moved by sacks of coined metal; but his nature is such that a humble and contrite heart will melt him at once."

These words sank into the soul of the duchess, and she e'en cast off her raiment of brilliant lustre and donned the coarse drugget dress, country snood, and heavy wooden clogs of a peasant maiden. In this lowly attire she mingled with the throng of pilgrims that pressed to the shrine of the great prophet, and, her rank being unperceived, she knelt down and kissed the holy relic. A curative influence thrilled through her whole being. When she rose to her feet, she felt sure her malady was gone, as indeed it was. We may be pretty sure that the saint, busy as he was, was not the dupe of her stratagem. No! he saw the duchess well enough through the peasant's garb, and he saw, too, that her *heart* was changed.

The legend up to this point is good, but the termination is even better. She had a revelation from Heaven that it was not obligatory on her to send the bright young life of her daughter into a nunnery, beautiful as such a sacrifice might be; and further, that there was *no need* to burn the heretic. Thereafter, the duchess was never weary of well-doing; she gave to the poor a large share, not merely of her substance, but of her sympathy also, and when she died, people mourned for her as for a dear and tender friend.

The circulation of such stories as the foregoing, legendary though they may be, cannot fail to have a wholesome and christianising effect in an unlettered community. The feeling of compassion for the poor is bound to be immensely stimulated in the minds of all who look into the legends connected with the biblical and the mediæval saints. The legends are no doubt frequently debased with romance and folk-lore, and it is easy to turn many of them into ridicule; but amid all their extravagances, they convey a sound morality and a sentiment of pity for the suffering and oppressed. I never saw the old peasant women of France plodding patiently to church without thinking of the quaint prayer of Villon's mother:

> "Femme je suis pauvrette et ancienne,
> Ni rien ne sais; oncques lettre ne lus;
> Au moutier vois dont suis paroissienne
> Paradis peint, où sont harpes et luths,
> Et un enfer où damnés sont boullus."

The sight of heaven fills the old woman with joy, and the sight of the place opposite heaven, with fear. But all round the church she sees the windows, every one filled with the grave and kindly face of an apostle or saint, each of whom is the hero of a tale. If there is a local saint among them, so much the better, for local saints did not live and die for themselves alone, but for the present and future benefit of the communities among which they laboured. The religion of the illiterate peasant folk is still, as in the case of Villon's mother, a kind of speechless and elementary awe, full of flames, seraphs, wings, devils, and saintly

benignities. The Deity may seem far enough away, but not so those middlemen, half-mortal, half-divine, whose relics visibly exist in their shrines and caskets. No questions are asked *how* St. John's finger came to Brittany, so long as it actually is there.

SOME GENERAL FEATURES.

One of the chief features of the French nation (outside of Paris, at least) is patience combined with a certain conservative stolidity. No nation is so tolerant of abuses, so pleased to jog on in the old rut. To represent the French as unstable and revolutionary is eminently absurd. The English are far more restive and impatient under oppression than the French have ever been. Our Civil War, ending with the execution of Charles I., came nearly a century and a half *before* the French Revolution and the decapitation of Louis XVI. The French would never have rebelled against a man with such a fine face as Charles I.: they would have paid him ship-money without a murmur, and let him arrest not merely five members but the whole Parliament, if he had wished. The causes that brought about our Puritan Revolution would in France have ended, not in bloodshed, but in songs and satirical pamphlets.

The French must be driven to the utmost extreme of desperation before they move, and then their retaliation is mad and ferocious. The long account due to tyranny is at last paid with a vengeful completeness that loses nothing by the delay. The violence of the French Revolution, the sweeping away of the aristocracy, the

Reign of Terror and the years of carnage that succeeded, were the necessary result of the galling servitude to which the patient people had been subjected for long centuries before. The appearance of Napoleon, the greatest military genius of all time, was an unfortunate and accidental circumstance that prevented the country from reaping the full benefit of the Revolution. He kept Europe in a turmoil for twenty years, established a new dynasty to conflict with the old in a far more fatal way than the Jacobite pretenders conflicted with our Hanoverian kings, and by causing the death of one million men, he inflicted a lasting wound on the manhood of the nation.

Since the downfall of Napoleon I., the French have been groping for a system of government that might have the stability of the old régime, and embody also the advantages accruing from the Revolution. They seem to have found salvation in a republican form of government, which, established in that hour of agony when the Second Empire fell, has lasted for nearly forty years, and, triumphant against enemies external and internal, has made France strong, happy, and universally respected. The peasants and artisans of France desire nothing so much as peace; they hold war in horror, and while ready and able to repel an aggressor, would be very unwilling to go and look for a foe abroad. The *red fool-fury of the Seine*, of which our poet speaks, exists no more: the phrase is indeed rather calumnious, and betrays an ignorance of French history and a want of insight into French life that are not creditable. A

man may stay in France for years, and not see as much fool-fury all the time as he would see in an afternoon at a big football match in England or Scotland.

TOO MANY CIVIL SERVANTS: A STORY.

The wonderful willingness of the French nation to be governed, pruned, and repressed, cannot fail to strike every observer. *No country has such a host of domineering civil servants, and these gentlemen seem continually on the increase.* I should think that the cost to the country for their official stationery must be appalling. A friend once sent me from Glasgow a pound of the tobacco known as "Cut Golden Bar," and instructed me by letter that he had done so. Three weeks after his letter came into my hands, an official from the "Indirect Taxation" Office called at my lodgings, and said that some *tabac de fantaisie* had arrived for me, and that, in order to begin official proceedings with the view of ultimately getting it, I must write to his office asking permission *to cause to be introduced* into France the pound of tobacco that had already been three weeks in the country. I wrote, as he suggested, but I used the wrong kind of paper, and had to begin over again, after losing another week. At last, I received permission to introduce the tobacco, and fondly hoped I should be smoking it soon. There was no unseemly haste in handing it over. A messenger looked in on me one morning, and remarked that I could have the tobacco on paying a duty of 17 francs 50 centimes. I told him that the sum he asked represented more than double the value of the stuff, and that

I could not enjoy tobacco that cost so dear. "The Government may keep it now: I don't want it," I said. He left me with many well-phrased expressions of regret. I received three more communications from the office, and promptly took no notice of them. A fourth was brought to me by a *garçon de bureau*, which stated that I could have the tobacco for 8 francs 75 centimes—half the original demand. I paid him the money, and after a week's further delay, received the tobacco, which, I may say, was in no way improved either as to quality or quantity, by its two months' stay in the Indirect Taxation Office. The official correspondence furnished me with pipe-lights for many a day.

OFFICIALDOM AND SATIRE.

While the French are fond of being governed, they have a sweeter recreation still, and that is *laughing at* their governors. The most august body in the land is the French Academy, consisting of forty members, whose duty it is to *govern and regulate the language*. To be elected an Academician is the highest honour to which a Frenchman can attain. Nevertheless, the Academy is frequently a subject of ridicule, and its members compared to Chinese mandarins. Everything is fair game for the French satirist: he must have his joke. And as civil servants, deputies, senators, and academicians, have dominion over him in various ways, he pays them out and tries to keep them humble by poking the most outrageous of fun at them.

This French proneness to smile under adversity, is the best proof that France is the home of philosophy.

If I might venture to criticise, however, I should say that the philosophy and submissiveness are *carried too far*. Everyone admits that the *matches* supplied by the French Government are poor and dear. I do not exaggerate when I say that a penny box of vestas, purchased in England, contains six times as many matches as the box of similar cost offered to the public by the French Government. As to quality, our matches are infinitely superior. The following droll paragraph appeared in a journal of 3rd September, 1909: "Some idea may be formed of the terrible fire at the railway station of Moulins, when it is stated that an iron axle was melted by the flames. Twenty waggons in all were destroyed: the only waggon that remained intact was one filled with matches from the Government manufactory. The latter fact does not astonish us. When matches were first invented, the intention was that they should strike. Nowadays, their non-combustibility is painfully evident to everybody, seeing that they will not burn even in the midst of the hottest flames. The State ought to award itself a prize for this discovery of incombustible matches. These, it is true, are of no use for lighting our cigars, but they might be extremely valuable in preventing an outbreak of fire. We proffer our unstinted thanks to the Government for its paternal solicitude towards us."

In this light and airy way does Jacques Bonhomme, the most patient of men, revenge himself on his rulers. "He has his jest and they have his estate," as Dryden said of Villiers. Monopolies of any kind are apt to become vexatious to the community. When the State is

the holder of a monopoly that turns to an abuse, one would think that the best means of redress lay in energetic and systematic remonstrance on the part of the citizens. But the French prefer to laugh at the State and cheat the revenue as much as they can: "sarcasm, seconded by smuggling," is their method. Mr. Barker says that in some towns of the south, even the Government officials habitually use contraband matches.

ATTITUDE TO GERMANY.

Dr. Kron, in his clever little text-book for German students of French, has the following paragraph at the beginning of Chapter XXII. "Les Allemands, et surtout les Prussiens, ne sont pas très populaires en France. On fera donc bien de ne pas trop afficher sa nationalité; toute allusion aux affaires politiques est déplacée et doit être évitée." The advice is sound and to the point. The Germans are not popular in France, and are never likely to be. In a moment of passing cosmopolitan enthusiasm, a Frenchman may say to you, "We had no luck in 1870, and the Germans beat us. But at Jena, when Napoleon was leading, it was the Germans who were crushed. Thus it is that luck changes sides. The spoils go to the victor. We lost two provinces, it is true; but had we been victorious, we should probably have dismembered Germany. We really have no right to make loud complaints." The very Frenchman whom I heard talking in that philosophic strain, made a boast, in my hearing, a few days after, that he had just *misled a German*, who had asked him the nearest road to a certain railway station. "I gave him," he said, "minute

directions that would take him miles out of his way, and lead him to the wrong part of Paris altogether." A childish enough boast, and one showing a very perverted sense of humour.

I have just been reminded of the petty incident mentioned, by reading M. Loti's account of his visit to Berlin. When that great writer wandered about the German capital and noticed the good-humour and politeness of all classes, he said to himself: "Can it be that these people are our enemies? Why on earth should it be so?" He walked on for a bit ruminating on the brotherhood of nations, the absurdity of national hatreds, and the futility of frontiers. Splendid reflections! which, however, were withered by a terrible sight: a French cannon from Mt. Valérien, exhibited as a trophy in one of the public squares of Berlin. "I was wrong," he exclaims: "*there are frontiers still*; and though I have a mind to detach myself from the turmoil of Europe and flee to the lofty serenities of Buddhism, how quickly would I return therefrom, *at the call of war!* . . . Patriotism may be old-fashioned and absurd, but it is irresistible and, perhaps, sublime." M. Loti felt so relieved when he re-crossed the frontier into France, that he could have hugged the customs officials for very joy: "un sûr instinct m'avait avisé: je revenais de chez *l'ennemi*."

M. Bazin, who has written in such an illuminating way on life in various parts of France, gives us, in his novel *Les Oberlé*, a melancholy picture of the slow, ruthless manner, in which French sentiment is being crushed out in those provinces that Germany annexed. The

whole story is heart-rending, and the novelist tries to make us feel that barbarism is gaining a triumph over civilisation. The picture is disquieting to every reader, of whatever nationality, for it raises the thought that brute force is the great law of the world, and that what happened to Alsace-Lorraine might happen to the dominions of any other power. And, indeed, it is true, that the unity of modern States has been mainly brought about by force of arms. The period immediately after the annexation is the time of anguish; but with the process of years, a new generation arises to whom the old hopes and ideals are unknown. Already, in Alsace-Lorraine, as we can see even from M. Bazin's book, the friends of France are sinking into a sullen despair, and those who insist on being French must needs flee over the frontier. May Europe never see the like again! It is a blow alike to Christianity and civilisation, when provinces are annexed without the consent of their inhabitants.

The terrible difficulties that Germany has had to face in her very unheroic task of denationalising Alsace-Lorraine, ought to be a warning to those who, relying on their military strength, have a desire to coerce countries that are weak or vanquished. Magnanimity is often another name for wisdom; and rapacity for folly. Germany would have been stronger to-day if she had let Alsace-Lorraine alone. It is asserted, of course, that the present divisions of Europe are artificial, and may be altered. The reply is that frontiers cease to be artificial when a national tradition, involving common sympathies and patriotism, has been formed by

the people who live within these frontiers. Patriotism, like love, does not easily brook coercion. Napoleon I. discovered that fact a hundred years ago, and the Germans have discovered it anew.

THE FRENCH AND GERMAN LANGUAGES.

Wonder is sometimes expressed among our educational authorities why French is every year becoming more popular in our British schools, while German is decidedly going back in estimation, and attracting fewer pupils than formerly. One of the reasons, as I think, is to be found in the great difficulties that meet the beginner at the very threshold of German grammar. German type is a horror and disturbance to the eye; the adjectives have far too many ways of terminating; the nouns exhibit a most sickening inconsistency in the choice of their plurals and genders; the verbs are full of pitfalls; and the prepositions leap about the sentences in a most disconcerting way. It is much easier to obtain a superficial knowledge of French than of German.

French *ought* to be the more popular of the two: it is the modern representative of Latin, the old international tongue; and for clearness, harmony, and wealth of neat, expressive idiom, it surpasses all living languages. German is strong and sinewy, but cannot compete with French in elegance and symmetry. The German vowels can't get room to breathe for the great hordes of beleaguering consonants. "When I read German aloud," said a Parisian to me once, "I feel as if I were chewing glass." It cannot be denied that German is a clumsy language, and that its prose-construction is truly painful.

German may be (*and probably is*) a far better investment than French for the scientist, the philosopher, the theologian, and the scholar. But as an education, in taste and style, nothing is better than the literature of France.

M. Brunetière, in one of his interesting and helpful articles, sets himself to discover and, in brief phrases, to describe, as correctly as possible, the characteristic feature of each national literature. German literature he judged to be *philosophic*; English, *original*; Italian, *artistic*; Spanish, *chivalrous*; and French, *social*. "Our vocabulary and our syntax," says M. Brunetière, "when reduced to their essential elements and considered in themselves, do not greatly differ from the syntax and vocabulary of Spanish and Italian. They have the same origin, and, in more than one respect, the same evolution. But whereas in Spain and in Italy, writers and, above all, poets have striven to make their language more sensuous and tender or more sounding and beautiful, in France, our writers in general, and our prose writers in particular, have aimed at making themselves *more easily understood*, and becoming, with each successive work, more simple and clear and lucid." It is the constant effort to be *clear* that, according to this great critic, distinguishes the French writer from the German. "The German is satisfied if he *understands himself*, and, in proportion to the difficulty which other people have in understanding him, does he find proof of the profundity of his thought. The Frenchman would consider that he had failed in his aim if the reader could comprehend him only with effort, and he prefers

to be regarded as superficial rather than as obscure." We might also venture to add that the care which the French have so laudably and persistently taken, in polishing and clarifying their language, has rendered it an indifferent vehicle for the highest kind of poetry. It is certain that the period of English literature, when French influence was most felt among us, is that of our best prose, our most brilliant satire, and our most unpoetical verse. The sublimity of Milton and Dante must not be sought for in French poetry. Whatever is vague, mystical, and indeterminate, has small attraction for the French mind, and must find some other and more appropriate vehicle than the French language.

EXCELLENCE OF EPISTOLARY LITERATURE.

De Quincey has somewhere said that if one wished to procure really good specimens of the English language, the best plan would be to waylay the postman, steal his letters, and select those written by ladies. Such an unlawful method is rendered necessary by the fact that so few of our lady-authors have seen fit to publish their correspondence, whereas French is peculiarly rich in the letters of cultured women writers. The distinctly social character of the French language, its unrivalled opulence of conversational idiom, its daintiness and grace, show that woman has had a large share in making it what it is. English is rather poor in the vocabulary of compliment. But when a Frenchman writes a letter and comes to the end of it, it is not a mere curt "Yours truly," that he puts before his signature. He has about twenty different expressions to choose from, no two

having precisely the same connotation. Those societies of learned ladies, whom many of us know only from the immortal ridicule of Molière, really aided greatly in refining the French language to a brilliant pitch. But far finer, as literature, is the familiar correspondence of that altogether charming Madame de Sévigné. One cannot point to anything in our epistolary literature nearly so good. Perfect precision in the choice of the right word, entire absence of strain, womanly tact, motherly affection, wide interests, well-bred ease; all these one gets in the letters of Madame de Sévigné. A very large part of French literature has the same effect on the reader as is produced on one who is *listening to good conversation.* France, again, has produced the most uniformly interesting and agreeable male letter-writer that ever lived, Voltaire namely. Critics sometimes say that Voltaire was first in nothing, but a good second in everything:

> "He, like the hindmost chariot wheels, was curst
> Still to be near, but never to be first."

The judgment does not apply to his letters. As a correspondent he has no equal among men.

The epistolary style is so consonant with the genius of France, that we find one of the most striking theological works in the language couched in the form of letters. I refer to Pascal's *Provincial Letters*, written to confute the Jesuits. It would be difficult to imagine a more dreary field of contemplation than the works of those arid casuists whom Pascal criticises. Yet he managed to interest the world in them and their

dubious doings, and the interest has continued till now. It is so refreshing to find wit employed in theological controversy. Could anything be more droll than Pascal's advice to the Jesuits to consult their own champion Escobar? "Why did you not acquaint Escobar with your objection before venturing to publish it? He might have given you satisfaction. It is not so very troublesome to get word from Vallodolid, *where he is living in perfect health, and completing his great work on Moral Theology, in six volumes.*" The huge folios of Escobar are obsolete, but their author lives for evermore in the sarcasms of Pascal, for Pascal is still a text-book. To make a theological pamphlet as fascinating as a comedy, and to do so in the form of a familiar letter which any society lady can understand at the first reading, are great feats indeed, and possible only in the French language.

LE MOT DE LA SITUATION.

Another department of writing in which the French excel is that which consists in Maxims, Witty Thoughts, and Reflexions of a sparkling and epigrammatic kind. Almost every author of eminence has struck off some brilliant *mot* that has become associated with his name. There is a remarkable public taste for such jewelries of diction, a taste which the politicians do their best to meet. A public man in Paris will tell you that *un mot généreux ou même simplement spirituel donne plus de chances chez nous que tous les coups de grosse caisse.* The following story is a good illustration of what is meant.

When Napoleon had been despatched by the Powers to Elba, and was thought safely planted there for the rest of his life, arrangements were made by Talleyrand and the Royalists for the return of the Bourbon family to Paris. On the evening before the great day when the Count d'Artois, brother of Louis XVI., was triumphantly to enter the city, Talleyrand and a few intimate friends were up late, giving a final touch to their programme, and seeing that no item of importance was overlooked. Every detail of ocular pageantry having been decided on, Talleyrand at last came to the question of wit and phraseology: "It is absolutely necessary," he said, "that the Count should utter some striking and notable phrase, some vivid epigram that will touch the general heart, some graceful sentence that will embody the pathos of exile, the joys of return and the wit of the speaker. We cannot leave such an important matter to chance: we must, here and now, come to a definite understanding regarding the Count's impromptu. I am sorry to keep you out of bed, gentlemen, but before we part, we must arrange what the Count is to say." It is easier to approve of such an idea than to carry it out. By general consent, one of the number, M. de Vaulabelle, was condemned to the honourable task of finding an epigram that might be fathered on the returning Bourbon. On Vaulabelle's refusal, the rest of the company pushed him into a small room adjoining, supplied him with pen, ink, paper, and lights, and informed him that he would not regain his liberty till he had found *le mot de la situation.* The yawning Vaulabelle was not immediately successful: his first

effort did not meet with approval, and he was told to go back to his room and try again. On his second appearance, he received the unstinted plaudits of the committee for this masterpiece: "*Je revois mon pays, je suis heureux. Il n'y a rien de changé en France, il n'y a qu'un Français de plus!*" (I see once more my native land, and I am happy. France is as she always was, save that she contains one patriot more).

Next day, the Count d'Artois, who was a noble youth and sat his horse well, had a magnificent reception from the Parisians. He did not even utter the touching speech that had been concocted for him, but his loyal adherents said he did, and that was enough to open every heart and awaken huzzas. *Il n'y a qu'un Français de plus* has become historical.

THE ACADEMIC DISCOURSE.

Old Fontenelle, who lived into his hundredth year, said of himself that he had *un peu de faiblesse pour ce qui est beau, voilà mon mal.* This *mal*, if it may be called so, is at the root of the French nature, and explains the great success of their speakers in the *formal academic harangue.*

Let me give an example of a speech recently made by a well-known French gentleman, M. Dujardin-Beaumetz, Under-Secretary of State *des beaux-arts*, on the occasion of the inauguration of a new monument to Alfred de Musset. The monument, which is entitled *The Poet's Dream*, is in marble, and beautifully symbolises the tender sentiments that the great lyrist so often evoked. No one should miss seeing the monument, which is

situated near the Grand-Palais in the midst of shrubs and verdure. The following is the conclusion of the Under-Secretary's speech:—

"On that funereal hill where the varied clamours of a huge city break and die away, a single willow casts its light shadow on the tomb of the departed bard. But here, beneath the thick splendour of the leafage, the lines of the poet will be savoured with an even keener relish. Every year, as the season of spring comes round, and decks this corner with its fresh and exquisite greeneries, the verses of Musset will arise spontaneously on the tongues of youths and maidens, who feel the raptures of beauty and love. And every autumn these great trees, as the wind tosses their branches, will shed on Musset's brow the homage of their leaves, which will then seem like fluttering wreaths of purple and gold."

The speech was deservedly *fort applaudi*. A Burns orator at a 25th of January celebration does not often give touches so delicate. The first sentence of the quotation, which refers to Musset's tomb in the cemetery of Père-Lachaise, produces a thrill at once, by recalling the fine verses beginning—

> "Mes chers amis, quand je mourrai
> Plantez un saule au cimetière."

Academical and literary speeches, in which from the nature of the case little or no partisanship is involved, show the French genius in its most attractive mood. *Such speeches, not being intended to prove anything new or to convince people of anything they do not wish to believe, must, in order to be tolerable, reach a very high*

standard of literary excellence. Tributes to departed genius are really, in popular estimation, pæans to the Glory of France, and who would dare to speak of the Fatherland save in terms of polish, premeditation, and enthusiasm? Another reason for the excellence of French literary speeches is that old Fontenelle, and others, gave perfect specimens of them long ago—specimens which succeeding writers and speakers do their best to imitate.

It is that august and wonderful French Academy which has helped so much to keep alive the *discours académique.* Every new member has to compose and deliver a eulogy on the immortal whose death made the vacancy. And then what choice epigrams, ingenious irony, subtle praise, and even delicate detraction are to be heard in the speeches of reception! The entire proceedings constitute a great national object lesson on the refinements of the French language. Those who are never likely to be elected to membership may write depreciative articles on the Academicians, laugh at the queer attire and dangling swords of these gentlemen, and hint that the Dictionary is progressing but slowly: but behind the severest of such censure, there is nevertheless profound veneration. There has been much talk about establishing a similar Academy in Great Britain, but such an institution would never thrive here: we have not the *tête académique.* Rhetoric that is not directed to a specific end, *e.g.*, political, is unable to hold a British audience very long. Even in Scotland, Burns speeches must not be too lengthy. We prefer political speeches to any other kind, and no country of

the world can show such an array of brilliant parliamentary orators. The nature of our institutions has fostered the political speech, and our own nature too, for we can keep cool and determined. France has a comparatively poor list of great political speakers, largely because she never has possessed the freedom of speech that we have in this country.

BORROWINGS FROM ENGLISH.

The French newspapers of the present day frequently comment in a jovial strain on the large number of English words that have been introduced into the language in modern times. Paris is well supplied with *high-life* tailors, who are qualified to make *highlander* costumes (pronounced *eeglanderr*). *Five o'clock* has been made a French verb meaning "to drink tea" anytime in the afternoon. *Sport* has long been a French word, and so have *golf*, *steeple-chase*, and many other expressions relating to pastimes. It is instructive to note the kind of words that the French have taken from us. *Meeting* and *speech* are, to my mind, the most remarkable.

There is no word that recalls so many things typically British as the word *meeting*. The glorious privilege we have of coming together in ante-room or hall, appointing a chairman, and quietly conducting business of a useful, useless, critical, expository, or denunciatory kind, is sweet to this great insular nation. A gentleman who, on the spur of the moment or from memory, can get up and impressively make a few remarks of a general nature that are not too glaringly distant from the topic in

hand, is rightly considered by us as a representative Briton. A meeting, with us, is the place for cursory remarks, not for eloquence and the dazzling glitter of words. Perhaps a little bit of rhetoric or purple patch may be permitted, now and again, but a calm, steady flow of unimaginative talk is most appropriate and most prized. British audiences do not love gesticulations and oratorical harangues. Note this fact that the French language has no words of its own corresponding to *meeting* and *speech*; for their *réunion* is, as they themselves recognised, a poor and parched substitute for a word of such sumptuous connotation as our *meeting*, and the French *allocution* or *conférence*, do not cover the same ground as *speech* at all. Do not these facts cause every British heart to leap and throb with pride? The meeting and the speech are our own special and peculiar inventions, the outcome of our solid and unhysterical natures, the appropriate adjunct of our tolerant system of representative government, the reflected image, in myriad places and forms of that great meeting-place for speeches that we call the imperial Parliament. It is only under the genial wing of a limited monarchy or a republic, that the meeting can thrive. An absolute monarch would have none of them; he would send his military to surround the hall; and what quiet gentleman could make cursory remarks or propose a toast under such conditions. Far from our meetings be the gleam of bayonet and the clank of sword! May no friend of ours ever have his speech interrupted by an invading and uniformed host! Though the French have frankly admitted the poverty

of their language by adopting the English words *meeting* and *speech*, they have not, as yet, been long enough under a republican government to adopt their practices to ours. The French have had far too much instruction from their teachers in the devices of rhetoric. Their proneness to the gleaming artistry of words is too marked for them to lay aside the *oration* and be content with the simple effectiveness of the *speech*. Much may be expected from the *entente*. What a triumph for us it would be if our system of *heckling* (which is as characteristically British as afternoon tea) could be introduced among our gifted neighbours.

I was very much astonished recently, when taking a sail on the river, in one of those little passenger steamers by which one can have such enjoyable outings as far as Saint Cloud, to hear an expression, which sounded like *Awe Rye*, very frequently used by the employés on the quays and by the crew of the boat. I concluded that *Awe Rye* must belong to the same family as *Yee-ho*, and be one of those elementary but inspiriting phrases which sailors of every clime and time have found so useful in relieving their feelings and expediting their work. The inference was an erroneous one. What the men were trying to say was the English phrase *All Right*, and it was all the English they knew. "All Right" is another of those incomparable expressions that it is the glory of our country to have invented. It is true that the *sense* of the phrase can be put into a foreign language: *tout est bien; tout est en état; vous pouvez aller de l'avant.* But even the most violent Anglophobe would admit, after trial, that none of these French translations,

accurate though they be, can compete in conciseness, vocalisation, and impressive pronounceability with the English original. I consider it a good example of taste and insight on the part of the French that they perceived the value of *All Right* and, without boggling, annexed it.

THOU AND THEE.

But if the French language has deficiencies these are more than overbalanced by its wealth in other ways. It is wrong and stupid to say that there is no word in the language for our *home*, for *chez* is the Latin *casa*, and, in its various combinations, conveys much the same ideas as the beautiful English word. It is most regrettable that the familiar speech of the family circle and of intimate chumship, has not, in English, any second person singular to make it dainty and sweet. The thouing-and-theeing, which was common in the time of the grand old Elizabethans, is now heard only in prayers and hymns. The abandonment of this *tutoiement* is a distinct loss to the treasury of our language. It is most delightful to hear a French mother speak to her children in the dialect of the home; or to listen to two old fellows, who were school-fellows fifty years ago, bandying the *tu's* and *toi's*, as they speak of "auld lang syne." The second person singular, in French, does not, indeed, invariably imply affection: if employed to a stranger, *tu* would express unwarranted familiarity and contempt; hence the grammars advise foreigners to confine themselves to *vous*. A grand lady might *tutoyer* her cook, but the

latter would not venture to use a second person singular in reply. To be affectionate, *tu* must be capable of employment by both parties in a conversation. That American lady, who had "tutoyed" a Parisian cab-driver, was horrified when he said to her: *Tu m'aimes donc tant?* (Dost thou love me then so much as all that?)

We have a sect of religionists in Britain, the Friends or Quakers, who resemble the French in but one thing, their employment at times of this *thou* and *thee*. When I say that the Quakers are a scrupulously truthful people, I do not mean to cast any aspersions on the French. I *do* say, however, that in their utter avoidance of the language of compliment, the Quakers are as unlike the French as it is possible to be. A Frenchman addresses an acquaintance as *tu*, with the object of displaying a genial intimacy; the Quaker calls me *thou*, not out of intimacy, but because he does not want to make me conceited by suggesting that I am plural. *You*, he thinks, implies plurality, and, in his eagerness to avoid all appearance of evil, he will not indulge even in a trifling pronominal fib. Such sensitiveness of conscience is very touching, but displays an indifference to the elementary fact that the value of a word depends entirely on the meaning that usage elects to give it. When a tradesman addresses you as "Dear Sir," and signs himself "Your obedient servant," you do not take these formulae in a literal sense. They are expressions of courtesy, and mean little or nothing. Their absence might, however, be resented.

French, being essentially a social and courtly tongue,

has an embarrassing wealth of polite phrases, many of which have, in our day, departed far enough from their literal meaning. Such phrases are the legacy of past centuries of a highly-refined civilisation, and they respond admirably to the needs of the French mind, a leading feature of which is the laudable desire to make the world pleasanter by saying agreeable and flattering things to people. It is sometimes alleged that it is easier to speak the truth in English than in French. The statement is false, though I admit that it is easier to *conceal* the truth in French than in English. Daudet tells us that the artistic mendacity of the Provençal is to be blamed on the sun. Speaking generally, there is much more sun in France than here, and a much more artistic presentment of objective reality. The French despise a crude deceiver, but they are not unwilling to extend a certain measure of admiration to him who, possessed of a strong inventive faculty, modifies the harshness of fact by a generous admixture of philanthropic fiction. The French are undoubtedly the pleasantest and politest nation of the world: but politeness and respect are, let me say, two entirely different things, the presence of the first, either in France or in England, by no means implying the existence of the second.

VIVACITY IN THE DOMAIN OF EDUCATION.

The vivacity of the French character is evident *even in many of the educational text-books* that are published by the modern Parisian firms. I have a pretty complete collection of books of French Conversation by French

schoolmasters, and can unreservedly recommend these as an antidote to melancholy. Such books, I find, have a tonic effect on the jaded intellect. I have no hesitation in awarding the palm for ingenuity to Monsieur Henri Bué. No novelist ever invented such complicated plots as this marvellous man. His book is *une ample comédie à cent actes divers*, and he deserves to be styled the "La Fontaine of the Imaginary Conversation." The surprising nature of his situations, which never err on the score of being too like anything in real life; the snappy answers, cool cynicisms, flat contradictions, morbid griefs, and causeless exultations of his characters; the wide range of interest they display in everything, from barrel-organs to sticking-plaster; prove not only the laudable determination of the author to *get in* as many words as possible, but also the possession, on his part, of the most nimble and mercurial of minds. He seems to have dredged the French dictionary for idioms and then placed them in a setting, at once entertaining and original. One page of his contains as many idioms as would do a novelist for an entire story. Everything in his book is unique. In one of his early chapters, that which treats of *clocks and watches*, he sets two fellows a-talking. One has no watch, and the other has a watch of an utterly unscrupulous kind. M. Bué imagines, for the purposes of his little game of idioms, that a Church Clock, which one of the characters can see by straining his head out at the window, has only one hand, the *minute* one. The Clock has been heard to strike some time before the conversation began: from such *data* the real time

is to be determined. The chapter closes in a very sensational way. The two are out on the street by this time, and one suddenly says *la faim me talonne*, and commences to tumble up a stair, four steps at a time, to a phantom dinner-party. Others have attempted to imitate M. Bué's manner, but in vain, for it was the gift of Heaven in him, and who can vie with that? This delightful book, which is capable of deluding even a schoolboy into the belief that he is having not instruction but fun, is supplied, without any restrictions, to the general public at the extremely moderate price of two shillings.

HOW TO LEARN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE.

In the early part of 1899 there was a Parliamentary Commission appointed by the French Educational Authorities, with the object of hearing the evidence of experts as to the *best methods of teaching modern languages*. As with us, of course, doctors differ. The evidence given before the Commission is procurable, and shows a decided leaning towards what is called the *direct method* of teaching, otherwise known as the *maternal*. In this method, the foreign language is, from the outset, exclusively employed, and systematic grammar is reserved for the final stages. There was, however, one witness, Dr. Sigwalt, who spoke strongly in favour of stringent grammatical drill at all stages. The Doctor, who teaches German in some of the most famous schools of Paris, has reprinted and re-inforced his evidence in an able book, *L'Enseignement des Langues Vivantes*, published in 1906 by Messrs. Hachette.

The Doctor holds, and I think rightly, that ability to read a language is a far more useful accomplishment than ability to speak it. For one Frenchman, to whom colloquial German is serviceable, there are at least a thousand who would be very glad indeed to be able to read it. Granted that every Frenchman could speak German, it is, nevertheless, to be presumed that they will live by far the greater part of their days *at home*, and so will very rarely have occasion to *speak* any language but their own. But every Frenchman has an interest, for the sake of commerce, of culture, and of politics, in knowing what is going on abroad, and in *reading* foreign books, newspapers, and reviews.

Next in importance to reading, the Doctor places *literary composition.* Many of us don't travel much, yet, for all that, we may have occasion to write letters to foreign correspondents. Our business men must have clerks to write to their customers in other countries. Literary men and scientists often find it necessary to communicate with students and investigators abroad. The Doctor consequently thinks it really more *useful* to be able to write to a German than to be able to speak to him.

Dr. Sigwalt puts *speaking* last in his programme. After the student can read and write accurately, he ought to make a lengthy stay abroad. The Doctor's words to the Commission were: "Quand on sait lire et écrire une langue, on est bien près de savoir la parler. Il suffit, mais il *faut*, pour cela, qu'on soit pendant quelques mois en rapport permanent avec des personnes qui la parlent."

The Doctor's clear-cut programme seems, in respect, at least, of the Englishman who is learning French, to involve a fallacy of some importance. It is extremely difficult to write a page of good French, and if the English student postpones his trip to France till he can write the language well, he will probably never go at all. That I am not exaggerating may be deduced from a confession made by a well-known examiner and linguist, Prof. Kirkpatrick of Edinburgh, who, in addressing a meeting of Scotch Secondary Teachers at Glasgow, on March 14th, 1903, said: "To this very day, in spite of many years of study and much continental travel, I find it extremely difficult to write accurate French or German prose!"

In other parts of his book, Dr. Sigwalt eloquently craves for a reasonable amount of liberty for those engaged in teaching the young. Here, he is undoubtedly right. The individuality of the teacher must on no account be stifled. Far more depends on the teacher than on the system. I have heard from old pupils of M. Chardenal of Glasgow, how well *he* taught French on the old grammatical lines. Chardenal's books may have rivals to-day, but it is well to remember that Chardenal's communicative zeal and power of interesting pupils are as much needed as ever.

JACOTOT'S METHOD.

New methods of learning modern languages are constantly springing up, mushroom-like, and dying away, often before the death of their authors. One method I should like to mention, because of the rather cool

advice given by its advocates. The student is advised to learn off by heart, six whole books of Fénelon's *Télémaque*, and, as a recreation, employ his odd moments (at the fireside, in train or tram) in repeating to himself a page or two. But he is warned that that is not enough. He must take the smooth and flowing sentences of Fénelon and twist them into all kinds of shapes till he has absolute power over them. Here, *e.g.*, is a sentence out of *Télémaque*: "Pendant le jour, je tâchais de montrer un visage gai et plein d'espérance, pour sountenir le courage de ceux qui m'avaient suivi." The learner is counselled to make up scores of sentences out of that single one, and put them into French, *e.g.*, "Did I strive to show a happy face during the night?" "I fear those who followed me did not keep up their courage." "You must strive to follow me, day and night, with countenances full of hope." "It is by night that we should keep up our spirits," etc. Such proceedings, though undoubtedly productive of mental agility, are of a rather exhausting character. I fear the pupil's health and spirits would suffer.

The advocate of the method I mention was M. Jacotot, an eminent linguist and Oriental scholar. His system is one that involves a very severe strain on the memory. Six books of *Télémaque* take up, I find, 120 pages of 250 words each. Jacotot made his pupils learn off all that matter accurately, and word for word. I know some to whom such a task would be easy, and I know others (by no means fools) who could not accomplish it in a hundred years. Jacotot was, it seems to me, rather

exacting: he might have been content with a single book, of a score of pages—which is a moderate task, and well within the capacity of an average pupil.

The English writer on education, Mr. R. H. Quick, thinks very highly of Jacotot's maxim: *Il faut apprendre quelque chose et y rapporter tout le reste*, and develops it thus: (i.) *Learn*, so as to know thoroughly (as well six months or twelve months hence, as now), *something* which fairly represents the subject to be acquired, *e.g.*, six books of *Télémaque* may be taken as a pretty fair sample of the French language; (ii.) *Repeat* that "something" every day from the beginning, without any omission, so that no part may be forgotten; (iii.) *Reflect* upon the matter thus acquired, so as, by degrees, to make it a possession of the mind as well as of the memory; (iv.) *Verify* and test all grammatical rules by the words and phraseology of the books you have committed to memory.

I am convinced that it would by no means be waste of time for our teachers to try Jacotot's method, *in moderation*, with some of their classes. Nowadays, there is far too little learning off by heart in schools.

Jacotot was well-advised in choosing *Télémaque* as the basis of his instruction. The book is sweet and charming; perhaps, indeed, the vocabulary is rather too luxuriant. But the youthful mind does not easily perceive the excess of a good quality, or rather, the good quality must be in excess before it is perceived at all. Then, the subject of *Télémaque* is one of the most delightful that the world has ever listened to. No known tale is more captivating to the imagination, or

more likely to stimulate the romantic soul of youth, than the wanderings of the hero,

> "Who, when his arms had wrought the destined fall
> Of sacred Troy, and rased her heaven-built wall,
> Wandering from clime to clime, observant strayed,
> Their manners noted and their states surveyed."

Plenty of incident, a host of noble lessons in righteousness, and a wealth of honeyed speech: all these are to be found in *Télémaque.*

THE PLEASANTEST WAY.

If anyone should ask me the *shortest* way to learn French, I should frankly reply that I did not know. I know the *pleasantest* way, however. Let the student spare no pains, to begin with, in mastering the sounds that are peculiar to the French language, *e.g.*, the modified *u*, the *eu*-sound, the *r*-sound, and the *four nasals.* It will probably take him a long time to conquer these difficulties, but the reward is great. A tutor is necessary, but the adult learner should not let the tutor dictate to him too much. The chief use of the tutor is for the training of the pupil's ear and the securing of a tolerably good pronunciation. When the learner can articulate the language passably, he should *read aloud* for three hours every day, mainly from standard French books, which contain the English translation on the facing pages. These hours, of course, should not be consecutive, but divided out through the day to suit his convenience. The Grammar he employs should be a synoptical one, and details should at first be neglected. Theodore's books consist of graduated

stories, and are excellently planned in respect of interest and the clever way in which grammatical points are insinuated. Storm's Dialogues are also good, and should be read and re-read scores of times. As these dialogues are not desultory but continuous, they do not tire the reader: they are also thoroughly French in tone, and full of amusing passages. When enough grammar is known, say by the end of the first year, text-books and translations should be discarded, and the daily oral reading confined to the masterpieces of modern French prose and poetry. It ought never be forgotten that a living tongue should address itself to the intelligence by the avenue of the ear. No one, who has not tried this reading aloud for a lengthy period, can have any notion of the exquisite pleasure it gives. If some one should object that three hours daily, for three or four years, is too much, I can only say that French is a very difficult language, that the subject requires enormous application, and that French literature is exhaustless. The plan I advocate ensures pleasure, profit, and culturing influences at every stage of the progress.*

* Prof. J. E. B. Mayor, one of the great classical scholars of England, has highly commended the practice of reading aloud: "I can read aloud," he says, "for five or six hours in the day—an exercise which (like Pliny and Celsus and John Wesley) I regard as very conducive to health. What knowledge I have of foreign languages I have acquired for myself. I have made many mistakes. The whole notion of "grounding" beginners in a language, by making them turn fatuous English into Greek, Latin, German, or what not, that cannot be other than fatuous, is false. Ollendorff, Kerchever Arnold, and their whole rabble, must be cut off root and branch."

LETTER FROM AN ENGLISHMAN IN PARIS.

As it is always well, in dealing with a subject of such magnitude as the teaching of modern languages, to seek light from a variety of sources, I requested Mr. Ramsay-Lang to give me a short statement of *his* views. Mr. Ramsay-Lang is an Englishman, and a great linguist, who resides in the *Rue de la Pompe*, Paris, and teaches his native language to Frenchmen, and French to natives of Great Britain. I have not hitherto mentioned his name, and perhaps most people who read the tart and cynical letter he sent in reply, will regret that I did not keep silence respecting him right on to the end. But, really, he means well, and, though I dissent from some of his views, I think his letter is valuable, and so give it in this place. His italics are noteworthy:

"I do not encourage any Briton who comes to my house, to expect that a month or two's stay in France will give him the power of *conducting a sustained argument* with the natives. Let him be content if he can understand an argument between two natives, without seeking to tumble *airily* into it. The easiest language for an Englishman to argue in is English; but even in English, an argument is almost always stupid and exhausting. The wisest man that ever lived in our island, Francis Bacon, he who expressed the value of conversation so well in his epigram, *Conference makes a ready man* would have nothing to do with controversy, but before giving his views on anything would simply say: *Franciscus Baconus sic cogitavit, i.e.*, 'behold my intellectual wares: take them or leave them as you think

fit.' Bacon's attitude is the right one to adopt, whether we be at home or abroad. It is certain, however, that ability to speak French *comfortably*, when the elementary topics of being and doing are conversed upon, on the road or in train and hotel, can be attained in a short time, and is, socially, most valuable. I refer, of course, to the simple kind of French: if a foreigner studs his talk with too many idioms, he is certain to come to grief himself and make other people *weary of life*. The debased form of French known as *argot*, should be entirely let alone.

"Let the adult student, who considers time to be precious, pay *no attention* to that finical and vain science of modern times called phonetics. Nothing can be more tiring and unfruitful than the study of diagrams representing various parts of the mouth and throat. One is constantly being struck with amazement at the genius of pedantic people in discovering the wrong way to do things. In the study of the ancient tongues, pupils are often set to put English into Latin before they can put a page of Latin into English. For many a long year it was thought that English Composition could be taught by a *lamentable process* termed Analysis of Sentences. And now, to the detriment of straightforward instruction in modern languages, pupils are like to be burdened with phonetics, a science that should be confined to the Universities *and not be allowed out*. The living voice is the indispensable means for learning to speak a language: theoretical diagrams in a book are of little use.

"As regards formal grammar, I think it should be reduced to a minimum, and such has already been done

in the admirable '*Skeleton* Grammars' issued by some British publishers. A grammar ought to be a *thing of convenience* and utility, *not* a cumbrous impediment. Really, our grammarians, in striving to be minutely conscientious with their exceptions and anomalies, have forgotten their original trade, which was to aid learners. Many of the grammars of to-day are written, not for novices, but for grammarians. The cult of exceptions has been carried *too far*. I remember how surprised I was to find that many worthy French people did not know the difference between *idiome* and *idiotisme*, and were unaware (I fear I must out with this, though it is almost like a calumny on the nation) that *pendule* is *not always* feminine, but *may* sometimes be masculine, in which case, however, it means not *clock* but *pendulum*. I have heard it said that some of the forty French Immortals would be hard put to it, if set down to answer the questions in French grammar proposed by *our* Civil Service Commissioners. The statement is quite believable, for did not our great historian, J. A. Froude, once say that he could not face the English History paper that these Commissioners set to a parcel of raw youths? And therein may you say the reason for eccentric grammars and pedantic methods of instruction. Examinations are to blame for the prominence given by teachers to the trifles and débris of knowledge and language. It is easier to examine on exceptions than general rules. It would be a *great boon* to education, alike in France and Britain, if all written examinations were abolished by Act of Parliament for the next fifteen years."

ENVOI: AS OTHERS SEE US.

Before parting with the reader who, I hope, can say of himself what Du Bellay exquisitely said more than 350 years ago,

"*Heureux qui, comme Ulysse, a fait un beau voyage,*"

I venture to allude to a distinguished French writer who recently paid his *first visit* to Great Britain. *I mean M. Pierre Loti* who, happily, is now convinced that we are not such beasts of prey as his experiences of us in Egypt and the Far East had led him to expect. For the sake of those who do not follow French affairs very closely, let me remark that M. Loti is the pen-name of a gallant officer in the French Navy, M. Viaud, who is also a brilliant novelist and member of the French Academy. His stories are a perpetual delight, and are full of tropical suns, dreamy landscapes, sea glamour, mists of the ocean, and mysterious rêveries. He is equally at home in portraying Iceland fishermen, African sultans, Syrian monks, Japanese dancers, Tahitian queens, and high Turkish ladies of the harem. From every book he has written emanates the feeling that life, with all its gleam, colour, romance, and magic, is an unreal pageant and Buddhistic illusion. Every reader of his books loves him, and, as a Briton, who can look back on many a raptured hour over his travel-tales, I feel it like a personal wound when he says anything against my country. In July, 1909, M. Loti spent some time in London, and wrote down his impressions. "I have been greatly surprised," he says,

"with the sights of England, one of these surprises being to see myself here at all. . . . I imagined that I should find everything in London anti-pathetic, but, on the contrary, I find that my racial hatred of this nation, which has been commonly regarded as our eternal enemy, is being gradually overcome. To know the English aright, you must meet them in their own country." Like all Frenchmen who come to Great Britain, Loti was amazed at the good order of our streets: "How correct and methodical everything is in these streets as regards the movement of the crowds! No embarrassment and no arguing: no one indulges in shouting, not even drivers when their cabs collide. At all the cross-ways there are numbers of policemen who, with a silent and graceful motion of the hand, bring carriages and motors to a stand-still, and allow the passengers, who never say a word, to cross to the other side of the street." Undeterred by the drizzle, the dreamy and observant Frenchman wandered up and down, observing the varied sights of the capital: kilted Scots who play on the bagpipes, choir-boys with trenchers on their heads (*petite toque surannée et gentiment cocasse*), soldiers in uniform making love to servant-maids, great parks in which sheep feed and children sport. He sometimes came up against things which made him stand still in sheer amazement, for example, those boxes into which passengers are requested to cast their old newspapers and waste-papers: *détail très anglais* he would say, and pass on. At one part of his journey he found himself among a crowd of Londoners, who were patiently waiting to see the King

and Queen drive forth from Buckingham Palace. He was greatly struck by the courtesy and good-nature of the people, and by the loyalty of even the poorest among them. "At last, the royal carriage! It comes on at a quick trot, preceded by a noble-looking escort of horsemen in red. I see the King's face, as he returns the salute to a group of poor folk who have greeted him: he has a genial and good-natured look; he smiles, and one can guess that he feels himself in security and at ease, as being really in the midst of his own people. And beside him, what! can that be the Queen? that woman, still so young, whose exquisite face, finer than those you see engraved on cameos, makes one think she can scarcely be thirty years old?" Much has happened since July, 1909, to make us think of the lines:

> "Sceptre and crown must tumble down,
> And in the dust, be equal made
> With the poor crooked scythe and spade."

It is a pleasure to think that Loti made the foregoing gracious allusion to our late King. Many a column of eulogy was written in France when Edward VII. passed away, but Loti's little tribute will last longer than any other.

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CORRIGENDA.

Page 27, line 27—*read* fellow.
,, 84, ,, 10—*for* Passy *read* Auteuil.
,, 129, ,, 31— ,, Silvestre *read* Souvestre.
,, 265, ,, 13— ,, bejewls ,, bejewels.
,, 317, ,, 25— ,, châlot ,, chalêt.
,, 355, ,, 25— ,, camel-skin *read* camel-skin hair.

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